JAMAICAN RELIGIONS

A Study in Variations

by

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ABSTRACT

The thesis is an anthropological analysis of variations, along several dimensions, in religion in Jamaica. It deals first with adaptive and acculturative historical changes, then with religious differences among the social classes of a modern village, and finally with rural and urban variations within a single cult.

Religion in Jamaica has changed and diversified constantly in response to shifting and diverging social and cultural conditions. Throughout the Island's history, religious groups readily modified traditional beliefs and ritual practices, and accepted or invented new ones in attempting to solve their problems. New cults and sects continue to develop, splitting off from existing ones and adapting their patterns to the needs and values of different social groups.

Yet, beneath this change and diversity lie continuity and order. The basic assumptions of the religious worldview are very tenacious, and many concepts brought from Africa by the slaves still persist. The various sects and cults of today fit together in a religious system which combines African and Christian premises and principles. Although based upon factionalism, rivalry, and constant change, this system exhibits structural equilibrium and can be viewed as a coherent, functional whole.

Such a view, which portrays change and fission as normal and orderly social processes rather than as symptoms of disorganization, seems necessary for the objective interpretation of modern, diversified institutions and cultures.

PREFACE

The Caribbean area contains a rich and varied array of Afro-Christian religions that offer much valuable information to the student of cultural change and acculturation. Yet, few of these religions have been adequately described or analyzed. Many have received only brief and cursory attention from serious writers, and some remain virtually unknown even to Caribbean specialists. This study began with the investigation of one such obscure cult--Jamaican Pocomania--and was later expanded to include other groups and movements on the island. It fills some of the gaps in our knowledge of syncretized Caribbean religions and helps to prepare a foundation for more comprehensive, comparative studies in the future. It is hoped that the approach followed and the conceptual framework developed will prove useful in effecting such studies and in furthering the anthropological investigation of complex, acculturating societies generally.

The text includes a large number of Jamaican terms which the reader may find unfamiliar. For his convenience, a glossary of the most extensively used such terms is provided as an appendix.

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Chapter I

ORIENTATIONS

Introductory Statement: The Larger Problem

Anthropologists have customarily devoted their greatest efforts to the comparative study of "primitive" peoples with relatively small, homogeneous societies and simple, stable cultures. Through decades of experience in such study they have developed a set of principles which have profound significance for the understanding of human behavior. However, the recent expansion of anthropological interests to include investigation of complex civilizations with their manifold and bewildering variations has necessitated re-examination of many of these ideas. Most anthropologists feel that their discipline has great potential value for analyzing and interpreting modern, "civilized" life. Yet, in trying to realize this potential they confront the problem of adapting some of their fondest concepts and methods to the highly intricate and variable cultural phenomena found in large, heterogeneous societies. The present work represents one kind of approach to this problem.

The study deals specifically with religious variations and their determinants in Jamaica, a West Indian island with a diversified population and a long history of acculturation. It applies and adapts anthropological concepts of religion to the extremely complex Jamaican situation and begins with a theoretical consideration of these concepts.

A View of Religion

At every stage of his life the individual confronts problems which he must solve before he can proceed. Most if not all of his activities constitute attempts to solve these problems--to overcome the difficulties imposed upon him by his environment and by the requirements of his own body. A culture, abstracted from the discrete behaviors of the various members of a human society, may be regarded as a problem-solving system--an integrated set of procedures for manipulating and exploiting the physical and social environments of the individuals concerned to satisfy their needs and wants.[1]

The development of culture rests largely upon the ability of human beings to formulate abstract concepts and communicate them to one another. Thus, a fundamental aspect of any cultural system lies in its world view--in the conceptual framework by which its followers reduce the myriad unique events which they perceive to an ordered, intelligible universe operating according to regular, specifiable principles. The world view contains the basic assumptions of a society, provides a set of criteria for classifying events according to the similarities and differences observed among them, and embraces some theory, however vague and implicit, of relationships among significant occurrences. It enables the individual to predict many events and, on the basis of his predictions, to manipulate and control these events in solving his problems.

No world view, however, provides a classification of the material world or a network of causal relationships among phenomenal events that is complete in itself. The members of every society perceive some occurrences that have considerable significance for their well-being but for which they can find no apparent causes. They always postulate unobservable causes--supernatural events or forces--to explain at least some of these phenomena and fit them into the conceptual system. Then, by performing actions designed to influence the supernatural causes, they can achieve security in the belief that the threatening events can to some extent be predicted and controlled. The body of ideas about and behaviors directly associated with the supernatural entities postulated by a society is termed the religion of that society, and constitutes an integral part of its culture.

This concept of religion is far from new. It has been expressed in various ways by many anthropologists and can be traced to Tylor, who in 1871 defined religion as belief in spiritual beings and commented on its philosophical aspect (Tylor, 1871, esp. I: 377-453). Some years later Frazer clarified the concept by making his well-known distinction between religion and magic. According to him religion involves the postulation of supernatural causation, while magic implies the assumption of necessary, immutable causal connections between phenomenal events (Frazer, 1915, esp. I: 52-243). The categories become obscured in practice, for any given action or idea may involve both assumptions and thus have both magical and religious components. An act is magical to the extent that it is believed to have inevitable consequences, and religious in so far as it carries with it the idea of supernatural causation. Every religion embraces much that is magical.

In terms of this concept, religious beliefs and procedures are human inventions used by the members of society in attempts to solve continuing and recurring problems that plague them. Many theorists have pointed out that the problems for which people devise religious solutions are generally those which defy non-religious procedures. Thus, the supernatural is everywhere invoked for help in predicting and controlling meteorological phenomena, game movements, crop growth, sickness, and other natural events which lie beyond technological capacities. In this respect religion appears as a secondary or residual category of culture, determined by the limitations and deficiencies of technology.[2]

Another set of problems which everywhere seem to require supernatural aid involves the prediction and control of the social environment. Here too, religion may be seen as secondary to other institutions. In order to operate effectively any society needs rules of conduct, so that each member can to some extent predict and control the behavior of his fellows. These rules must be enforced, for they impose restrictions on the individual, who consciously or unconsciously resents the obligation of submitting to the demands of others. In Freud's terms, every person constitutes a potential enemy of society because of deep-seated resentments against rules which prevent the satisfaction of his instinctual desires, and he conforms to social demands only because he fears the consequences of behaving otherwise (Freud, 1957: 3-13). In addition to such devices as child training and overt coercion, every society utilizes fear of the supernatural, promises of spiritual rewards, and other religious methods to insure that its members meet social expectations. The social uses to which people put religion depend upon the organization of their society, the particular problems of social control generated by this organization, and the limitations of secular procedures in solving these problems. In a very real sense, then, religion grows out of the imperfections of culture.[3]

Religion constitutes a secondary part of culture in still another respect. As human inventions, religious beliefs and procedures grow out of and reflect man's experiences in the phenomenal world. The characteristics which the members of a society attribute to supernatural beings usually derive from those which they perceive in natural beings, and the methods and techniques that they use to deal with spirits stem from those found efficacious in influencing living persons. This is not surprising, for only by generalizing from the known can the unknown be rendered intelligible and thus subject to manipulation. Freud goes further, contending that people project onto the supernatural the characteristics which in their frustration at being socialized they impute to the persons who trained them, and that religion therefore reflects the family structure and socialization practices of the group (Freud, 1957: 26-40). Kardiner, building on this theory, explicitly terms religion a secondary institution--a projective system growing out of the common emotional experiences of a society's members and symbolically expressing the primary institutions that give rise to it (Kardiner, 1945: 23-46). In several senses, then, religion forms a residual category of culture--a sort of superstructure on the cultural hull. The limitations and defects of culture determine the purpose of religion, and religious forms depend upon the characteristics of secular institutions.

On the other hand religion may be seen as central and determinate in some respects. Once postulated, supernatural beings become as real as natural ones and have just as powerful effects upon human behavior. Beliefs in spiritual causation influence the perception and interpretation of phenomenal events and determine or limit the kinds of procedures that may be used to manipulate them. This may be explained in terms of the functions of religious beliefs and actions--the problems that they do solve. Clearly, they have little direct effect upon material events but, as Malinowski has shown, they reduce fears and anxieties provoked by these events and thus become rewarding in themselves. That is, they solve emotional problems by making the elements seem less threatening and by giving men the courage and confidence they need to proceed with dangerous undertakings (Malinowski, 1948: 50-70).

Religion also solves problems arising from group living. It offers protection or escape from threatening figures within the society and often gives means of retaliation against them. Probably more important, it provides defences against or compensations for the coercive features of society itself by furnishing approved techniques of expressing repressed desires and hostile urges (Freud, 1957: 21-58). Furthermore, it constitutes a potent source of social control. Because religion enables persons to predict and control one another's behavior more effectively in numerous situations, they come to value it and to develop various means of defending and reinforcing it. Every society thus evolves a complex set of religious and secular mechanisms, each supporting others, to insure conformity among its followers.[4] People everywhere depend upon their religions just as upon their technologies; rely upon their spirits as much as upon their fellows. Indeed, social organizations may usually be analyzed as if they included spirits as well as persons, for the people behave as if this were true.

Religious beliefs and behaviors, then, complement, supplement, and reinforce other cultural patterns, which in turn support them. In so far as religion can be abstracted and analyzed as a distinct, separable complex or system, it operates in reciprocal relationships with other institutions, being residual on the one hand and central on the other. The present work is an analysis of Jamaican religion as such a system--it specifies the principles of belief, organization, and behavior which may be said to govern it, and explores some of its relationships with other parts of culture. Attention will center on the temporal changes which this system has undergone and on the contemporary variations which occur within it.

Types of Religious Variation

The conceptual scheme presented above indicates several factors that help to explain the diversity of religious systems. First, dissimilar habitats, technologies, and social organizations give rise to different problems and thus to different religious orientations. Secondly, societies may hit upon diverse religious and secular methods of solving any given problem. Thirdly, different kinds of families and socialization practices promote repressions of different desires and hostile impulses, and form dissimilar foundations from which to project religious beliefs. Fourthly, any given repression may be expressed in hundreds of unique symbolic forms. Finally, societies build their religions upon quite different world views--upon diverse basic assumptions and conceptualizations concerning the supernatural and its relation to the material. In view of all these considerations it is almost inconceivable that any two societies, even if they had identical secular cultures, could develop duplicate religions.

Variations occur within societies as well as among them. Individuals differ in childhood experiences, social status, economic or technological specialization, and numerous other respects. Their religious beliefs and behaviors vary accordingly. Many of these variations are culturally conditioned and patterned, however, and are integrated into the society's system of religious organization. In small, homogeneous societies such religious differences are relatively slight and circumscribed. They arise for the most part out of sex and age differences and fit into comparatively simple status and role arrangements. Men, women, children, the aged, and perhaps group leaders have different religious duties and obligations, but few other distinctions are recognized. The few persons who deviate markedly from the approved norms either suffer expulsion from the society or assume special religious statuses such as that of shaman or priest.

In larger, more heterogeneous societies such factors as social class or caste, economic specialization, and geographic dispersion promote much more extensive variations in religious beliefs and behaviors and vastly more complex systems of religious organization. People of different sub-groups face divergent problems and in response to them often develop institutionalized sub-religions, each with its own set of statuses and roles. The characteristics of such sub-religions, their interrelationships, and the positions which they occupy in the larger religious system depend upon the society's organization and its premises about the nature of the supernatural. It is a contention of the present study that monotheistic and polytheistic world views tend to promote very different kinds of sub-religions.

Polytheism takes many forms, but always implies some sort of supernatural division of labor. People who believe in a number of deities believe also that these deities control different classes of phenomena, offer solutions to different kinds of problems, or associate with different groups or categories of persons. The particular methods of organizing the worship of such a collection of spirits vary, of course, with specific beliefs about their nature and functions as well as with the organization of society, but usually involve some specialization. People emphasize the gods who they believe can help them the most and, because they have different problems, concentrate on different gods. Farmers, for example, may emphasize agricultural deities while fishermen propitiate the sea gods. Each clan may have its own totem or set of ancestors, and the members of each village may pay homage to the local spirits. Polytheism seems well suited to heterogeneous societies, for divergent sub-groups can invent new gods or elevate obscure spirits to prominent positions in the supernatural hierarchy. In this way religion often becomes quite specialized, with particular groups of persons taking primary responsibility for the placation of specific gods. Organized and institutionalized sub-religions of this type will be termed "cults" in this work, and the larger religious configurations which include them "cult systems."

A major principle characterizing inter-group relationships in a cult system is cooperation. Each cult has a definite status and role in the total religious scheme and each, by satisfying the requirements and enlisting the support of a generally recognized deity, makes an important, specifiable contribution to the welfare of society. Just as the fishermen recognize the importance of agriculture but do not engage in it themselves, they appreciate the necessity of propitiating the earth mother but leave her placation to the farmers. The cults are mutually dependent. They exist as integral parts of a unified ideological and structural religious system and cooperate to insure the well-being of all the members of society.

The monotheistic society, when it becomes large and heterogeneous, presents quite a different picture. Its members place high value on the idea that there can be only one deity, who governs the entire phenomenal world and to whom all human beings owe allegiance. Such a spirit is necessarily unspecialized and versatile, for he must solve many kinds of problems for many different people. Yet, ideas about his specific nature and the proper ways of worshiping him often become stereotyped. In such cases, as the history of Western civilization demonstrates, emergent social classes and other groups tend to have difficulty reconciling these ideas with their divergent sub-cultures. In adapting religion to their particular problems they evolve new concepts about the characteristics of the deity, his relation to the material world, and the ways in which he should be worshiped. When these sub-cultural and ideological differences become pronounced, religious schisms occur and divergent organized sub-religions split off from the parent church. Such splinter groups are usually termed "sects."[5] The present work follows this usage and refers to the religions which give rise to them as "sect systems."

In contrast to cults, which operate on a basically cooperative basis, sects are characterized by strong competition. All profess to worship the same god, but they have divergent and often conflicting ideas about the nature of this god and differ widely in their methods and techniques of dealing with him. The members of each sect believe theirs to be the correct ideological, ceremonial, and organizational system and consider the other groups mistaken. Each sect competes with the others for members and tries to achieve dominance and power. Although the sect system exhibits functional adaptation to a diversified society, with each sub-cultural group embracing the sect which offers its members solutions to their special problems, it typically produces rifts and antagonisms. Despite the unific ideal of its monotheism, it often promotes disunity.

It may be noted that in practice Christianity is not strictly monotheistic. Catholicism, in its folk aspects if not in theory, can perhaps be better characterized as polytheistic, and in its deification of specialized saints appears to have evolved something of a cult system. Indeed, Catholic history illustrates strikingly the difficulties involved in attempting to adapt monotheism to widely differing cultures. Protestantism, at least as manifested in the more fundamentalist sects, seems mainly ditheistic, but this in no way invalidates the analysis. The two deities represent the opposing principles of good and evil, and in a sense neither is complete without the other. The worship of God automatically implies an opposition to His antithesis Satan. Indeed, Protestantism forms a classic example of sectarianism.

Cult and sect systems, then, represent two markedly different ways of organizing religion in large societies. In formulating them the writer does not mean to imply that other kinds of involved religious configurations cannot be found. The point is that religion in a heterogeneous society can be analyzed as a system operating in terms of specifiable structural, ideological and behavioral principles and that intra-societal religious variations can be seen as integral parts of such a system. Cults and sects receive attention here because both occur in Jamaica. The early slaves brought cult religion from Africa, and Protestant Christian missionaries later introduced sectarianism. Both types have since undergone considerable change.

Religious Adaptation and Acculturation

Since synchronic diversity often results from temporal change, religion varies through time much as it does across society. Technological innovations, environmental changes, and shifts in social organization create cultural transformations to which religious ideas and procedures adapt. People evolve fresh beliefs and rituals to solve new problems and discard religious patterns rendered superfluous by secular inventions that solve old ones. Such modifications usually lag behind secular developments, often occur unconsciously, and may create more problems than they solve, but they may be seen as attempts to adapt religion to changing socio-cultural contexts. By and large these adaptive religious changes constitute developments within the existing religious system rather than fundamental changes of the system itself. That is, they represent not basic modifications of religious principles but new applications of them. Thus, polytheistic people may add new gods and cults but will seldom develop competitive sect systems. Their new deities will have characteristics similar to the old ones, and their new cults will operate according to the same principles that govern those already in existence. Monotheistic people go to great lengths to preserve the concept of the single god, although they may change their ideas about his particular characteristics and develop hundreds of sectarian variations on the central monotheistic themes. Even under conditions of extensive cultural change such as found in acculturation situations, religious adaptation rather than fundamental transformation of the religious system may be expected, provided a new religion is not introduced.[6]

So far as the writer knows, this aspect of religious change has never been examined. The hypothesis gains support, however, from other kinds of studies. Herskovits implies its validity in his works on African retentions in New World Negro cultures, although he does not deal with adaptive change as such.[7] Hallowell has shown that features of personality, which must be basic to religion, remain constant over long periods of time despite radical culture change (Hallowell, 1952). Whorf contends that the world view of a society limits and delineates the kinds of concepts that can be formulated by its members, implying stability of the world view itself and thus of the religious base (Whorf, 1956: 134-59, 233-70). Certain aspects of Western thought also support the hypothesis. For example, despite the tremendous impact of science on their civilization, Europeans and Americans still seem unable to break away from the dualistic modes of thinking handed down to them from ancient Near Eastern religions. Studies of adaptive change in non-Western religions are rare, however, because religion under missionary influence is usually one of the first institutions to undergo acculturation. Few societies in modern times have had religions which, uncontaminated by Western influence, have adapted naturally to changes in secular institutions.

Jamaica offers data which promise to shed light on the process of adaptive religious change, for the historical literature reveals that no attempt was made to proselytize the slaves for the first hundred years of their residence on the island. They remained free to adapt their religions to the new conditions, and did so by forming cults and evolving beliefs and rituals very similar to those of Africa. Fundamental changes in their religious system occurred only after intensive proselytization by Christian missionaries in later years.

The analysis of religious variation and change becomes vastly more complicated in such situations, for under religious proselytization two kinds of developments occur simultaneously. Representatives of the dominant society introduce new supernatural orientations to members of the subordinate society at the same time that the latter are adapting religious patterns to changing cultural conditions. When both groups are heterogeneous, one having a sect and the other a cult system, the problem becomes even more complex. Subordinates accept new religious ideas and procedures, integrate them with the old, and adapt them to new situations. Terminology becomes reinterpreted and confused in application. In addition, people of diverse statuses behave differently. Some totally reject the new ideas while others accept them without question. Still others evolve syntheses of the old and new. Even in such apparent disorder regularities can be found, however, and the present study is concerned with the kind of religious system which the subordinate society will develop under such conditions. Specifically, it attempts to analyze and explain, in terms of the theoretical framework presented above, what happens when people who follow a cult system are intensively proselytized by sectarians. Of particular interest are the religious principles and the types of institutionalized sub-religions that emerge after prolonged acculturation of this nature.

Specific changes will depend, of course, upon many factors in the acculturation situation and in the parent cultures. Still, one general prediction can be made with fair confidence; the society will neither totally accept the new religion nor retain its old one intact. It will evolve some sort of synthesis of the two--a compound religious system. It follows from the theory that the features of the old religion most likely to be retained are the basic premises of its world view and the fundamental, covert behavioral and organizational orientations of its followers. New ideas and procedures will be reinterpreted and set into the existing ideological and structural framework as they are accepted.

More specific religious patterns may persist as well, as Herskovits and his followers have demonstrated in their studies of New World Negroes. These students have shown that Caribbean religions retain Africanisms of varying degrees of purity at all levels of generalization.[8] Their analyses leave many questions unanswered, however. Herskovits offers a set of hypotheses to explain why more Africanisms occur in relgion than in most other institutions, but he does not attempt to explain variations in the survival rates of different religious patterns. Nor does he analyze the acceptance rates of new religious features or the extent to which different groups of persons within the society vary in accepting the new and retaining the old (Herskovits, 1946; M. G. Smith, 1956b: 11-26; 1960: 35-9; Rubin, 1960: 112-13). The discussion of such questions leads to considerations that properly are more methodological than theoretical.

The Historical Approach

The first main line of approach to these problems will be diachronic. Unlike many areas in which anthropologists work, the Caribbean offers a wealth of historical material to supplement field data and complement synchronic analysis. Although the descriptions of historical West Indian religious phenomena are often fragmentary and biased, they contain many hints and insights which clarify the contemporary picture and aid our understanding of the processes of religious acculturation. Unfortunately, neither Herskovits nor those who have followed his lead in Afro-American acculturation studies have made full use of these sources.

Despite the historical nature of their main problem, that of tracing African survivals among modern Caribbean peoples, these students use primarily ethnographic and comparative methods. Their studies leave no doubt that African elements do survive in modern West Indian cultures, but their methods and concepts raise more questions than they answer concerning the significance of these Africanisms and the reasons for their persistence.[9]

One problem concerns the particular cultural antecedents of contemporary Africanisms and arises from the heterogeneity of slave origins. Although such great West African states as Dahomey and Ashanti supplied most of the slaves to the traders, it is clear that many different African societies over a wide geographical area contributed to the slave population of the West Indies. Herskovits has developed a simplified method of analyzing the particular situations in Haiti, Trinidad, and certain other Caribbean societies. He begins by assuming that the majority of the slaves came from the Guinea Coast and by postulating a relative cultural homogeneity within this area. That is, he views the different West African cultures as basically only variants of a larger regional pattern. He then inspects modern Caribbean cultures for traits similar to those of selected African tribes, postulating genetic connections for those he finds. In Haiti, for example, he discovers many persons of Dahomean ancestry and various cultural and linguistic items identical with those of Dahomey. Taking this tribe as representative of Haitian antecedents, he then hypothesizes additional survivals from it by comparing the two. In Trinidad, using a similar method, he finds a dominant Yoruba influence (Herskovits, 1937b: esp. 17-32; 1941: 61-85; Herskovits and Herskovits, 1947: esp. 287-317).

This approach is not applicable to the Jamaican situation, which gives little evidence for a preponderant influence from any one African society. Some authors attempt to trace Jamaican religious patterns to Ashanti origins, but their conclusions, based on meager and selected data, remain untenable.[10] Moreover, the present study deals not with Africanisms as such, but with historical changes and modern variations in Jamaican religion. An alternative approach seems advisable. To ascertain the antecedents of Jamaican religious patterns and thus set a base from which to trace changes, the writer will first compare ethnographic data on the tribes from which large numbers of Jamaican slaves were drawn. He will then abstract cultural patterns, particularly those concerning religion, common to most or all of them. The main features of religion among the early slaves, gleaned from historical sources, can then be explained in terms of African antecedents and of adaptations to the cultural context of slavery. Subsequent changes can be traced from this base (cf. Simpson and Hammond, 1960).

Herskovits' method has certain fundamental disadvantages. It enables him to demonstrate conclusively the origins of pure, specific Africanisms--items identical with those of African cultures--but he finds many survivals which are not pure. He has devised a set of concepts for evaluating the extent of African influence in such traits. "Survivals" conform closest to the original forms; "syncretisms" involve combinations of European and African elements; and "reinterpretations" consist in the application to Western forms of African meanings (Herskovits, 1946). Although Herskovits considers survival, reinterpretation and syncretism acculturative processes as well as descriptive categories, the use of such concepts in fact often obscures the problems of process. One can never be sure of their applicability in particular cases, because they refer only to observed similarities. A presumed "survival" may actually be an independent development, for no relationships have actually been traced. Furthermore, Herskovits' method cannot show how different combinations develop or explain why some patterns persist while others do not. It leaves open the whole question of the emergence of new traits and new adaptations of existing ones. Herskovits is less concerned with culture change than with origins and survivals. He views culture as a set of traditional patterns rather than as a functionally integrated system of behavior and thus fails to notice many factors that influence change (cf.

Fauset, 1944: esp. 98-109). Nevertheless, his works have shown the West Indies to be useful laboratories for the study of acculturation, and he has laid the groundwork for more precise analyses of culture change. Many of his conclusions may be considered hypotheses amenable to testing through more rigorous methods.

A detailed study of historical documents concerning religion in Jamaica can perhaps answer many of the questions emerging from Herskovits' studies and aid the understanding of processes of religious acculturation. It can show just which patterns contain African elements and which are only parallel forms, and it can indicate adaptive changes as well as simple recombinations and reinterpretations of existing traits. By isolating the conditions under which Africanisms survive or die out and those under which innovations are accepted or rejected, it can provide the foundation for a more realistic theory of culture change than any based solely upon examination of the end results of culture contact (cf. M. G. Smith, 1960: 35-9).

To explain the differential persistence of African elements in various West Indian institutions, Herskovits has formulated the concept of "cultural focus," which he defines as that aspect of a culture holding greatest interest for the people concerned. He maintains that in situations of culture contact the focal area tends to exhibit more and purer retentions of original patterns than other areas.

Thus, religion in Caribbean cultures contains more Africanisms than do other institutions because religion is the focus of Negro interest both in Africa and in the New World (Herskovits, 1946; Herskovits and Herskovits, 1947: 6, 303-4). But, as M. G. Smith has observed, ". . . there is always grave danger in exaggerating the relative importance of one aspect of culture at the expense of others . . ." (M. G. Smith, 1956b: 14). Such explanations often reflect more the interests of the ethnographer than the dominance of any one institution in the culture that he studies, and they ignore the functional interdependence of the various parts of a culture. Smith shows that in practice Herskovits defines the focus in terms of the retentions and then explains the latter by reference to the former, thus rendering the whole conceptual system circular. In Smith's words, ". . . the variable persistence of cultural elements of different kinds is simply restated in the form of a system of hypotheses and concepts, ostensibly developed to further the analysis of this variability, only to be canvassed thereafter as its explanation." (M. G. Smith, 1956b: 13-14).

Such pitfalls can be avoided by examining the historical data and tracing step by step the changes in behavior and belief through the history of culture contact. Mintz has demonstrated the value of historical analysis for formulating alternative explanations concerning differential persistence of Africanisms. The focus concept, he says, is not supported by Jamaican data. "Rather it would seem that the Negro slave preserved those parts of his ancestral culture which he was permitted to retain, and that this in turn depended primarily on the needs of the plantation system, and on the power of the planter to exact conformance" (Mintz, 1955: 96). From a similar viewpoint, Smith suggests distinguishing foci in the contact situation rather than in culture itself, and tracing the effects of variable accultural pressures upon different parts of culture. He hypothesizes that institutions subjected to great pressure over time by the dominant group will change more and exhibit fewer aboriginal retentions than those receiving less attention. Such an approach enables the student to trace actual changes and retentions through history and relate them to changing social relations at progressive time periods. As Smith points out, it promotes the formulation of more limited but more testable hypotheses than does that of cultural focus (M. G. Smith, 1956b: 15-16).

The present study deals primarily with religion and therefore cannot evaluate the effects of differential acculturation pressures on various institutions. It can and does, however, utilize Smith's method to derive and test similar hypotheses within the field of religion. First, it examines the intensity of religious proselytization during succeeding historical periods and relates the amount of change and retention to this variable. Secondly, it compares differences in acculturative pressures against diverse groups and categories of persons in the subordinate society and evaluates the effects of these differences upon religious patterns among these various classes of people. Thirdly, it analyzes the extent and kinds of pressure exerted against members of the subordinate society by different types of acculturators and compares the effects of these variations. Finally, it inspects differences in persistence between religious patterns subject to strong inhibitions and those largely ignored by the dominant group. In all cases acculturation pressures are measured in terms of extent of interaction between members of the subordinate and dominant societies and amount of conscious effort toward change exerted by acculturators. The hypothesis in each case is that the amount of pressure toward change will be directly related to the extent of change and inversely related to the degree and purity of African retentions.

Complicating factors such as internal pressures toward or against acculturation operating within the subordinate group may be expected to mediate the effects of outside forces. These internal pressures involve the conscious goals and problems of group members with respect to their relations with representatives of the dominant society, and will receive considerable attention in the analysis. The study concentrates not on the persistence of Africanisms or the acceptance of Christian traits as such, but on the development from various antecedents of a new religious system adapted to the solving of continuing and recurring problems. The primary concern lies not with the tenacity of ancestral customs but with the ways in which people interpret, attack, and solve their problems and with the ways they use religion to meet new situations. A major purpose of the historical analysis is to gain a better understanding of contemporary Jamaican religious phenomena and to aid in the prediction of their future development. The second and major portion of the study deals directly with the contemporary scene and concentrates on present-day variations in Jamaican religion.

Field Methods and Techniques

The synchronic analysis builds upon the historical study and, like it, emphasizes the informal religious groups which originate and grow within the context of Jamaican society. This emphasis can be rationalized on the grounds that these groups, unrestricted by rules imposed by ecclesiastical hierarchies, adapt their beliefs and practices more readily to the distinctive problems of their members than do established churches. Still, the writer must admit that a significant factor in his concentration on native religions is simply an interest in exotic and demonstrative religious behavior. Indeed, he began his research with the explicit intention of studying the Pocomania cult, perhaps the most spectacular of these groups. The present design of the study grew in part out of his realization after some time in the field that a fuller understanding of the larger religious configuration would greatly facilitate the analysis of Pocomania. He subsequently expanded his research to acquire this perspective.

The research took place during two field trips to Jamaica, a three month session in the summer of 1955 and one lasting four months the following summer. The writer spent most of his time during the first session among the Pocomania groups of Spanish Town, the second largest city on the island. He also conducted interviews and observed ceremonies among Pocomania groups in Kingston, the capital and largest city, and in rural areas of Jamaica. He did some research among other kinds of religious groups in Spanish Town. The decision to work in Spanish Town was based on prior contacts among Pocomanians there, enabling the writer to establish rapport within a relatively short time. Having done so, and learning that the groups were vigorous and active, he saw no reason to shift operations to another locality. As the literature on Jamaica at that time contained only sparse information on Pocomania, the research was largely exploratory. The writer utilized primarily the techniques of participant observation and non-directive interviewing, supplementing these during the later phase of the study with interviews of a more structured nature.

Several considerations prompted the selection of a rural community as the site for the second period of research. Having noticed that Pocomania beliefs and practices varied from group to group, the writer hypothesized that these variations would be related to differences in problems arising from dissimilar socio-cultural environments and decided to compare the rural with the urban manifestations of the cult. In addition, his experiences with other religious bodies in Spanish Town induced him to expand the research--to compare several different sub-religions and study their interrelationships. An intensive investigation of a single, relatively small community seemed the best way, within the limits of available time, to accomplish this end. The selection of a suitable village, however, presented difficulties.

Finding a rural community with various religious groups was no problem; hundreds of Jamaican villages fit this requirement. But finding one with a sizeable, permanently functioning Pocomania band involved more trouble. Many rural communities contain Pocomania devotees and a fair number boast leaders of the cult, but few maintain bands which meet regularly. Most rural leaders hold ceremonies but once a year, inviting members from widely scattered areas and in turn attending the meetings of other leaders. The writer learned of fewer than a dozen permanent, localized groups in all of rural Jamaica, and many of these occurred on the fringes of urban areas. Had his interest focused on Zion Revival, a similar but more popular cult, he would have had a much wider range of choice.

Guided by the working hypothesis that Pocomania beliefs and practices would vary in direct proportion to differences in their socio-cultural environments, the writer attempted to select from the several suitable communities the one which provided maximal contrast with Spanish Town. After some consideration, he chose the village of Orange River, in central St. Mary parish, as the most likely site. Spanish Town lies on the hot, dry southern Jamaican plain, cut off by the high mountainous backbone of the island from the northerly winds and rains that refresh the northern area. Located only fifteen miles from Kingston, it forms a part of the major urban center of Jamaica, and most of its 15,000 inhabitants are landless laborers. Many find employment only irregularly in the local businesses or on the big sugar plantations that surround the city, and some travel regularly to work in Kingston. In contrast, Orange River is a small, relatively isolated village, situated on the cool, rainy northern slope of the mountain range, and is inhabited largely by unsophisticated peasants who seldom visit the urban centers. Although the basis of its selection obviates the possibility of its being typical, the village seems in most respects to be reasonably representative of rural Jamaican communities.

Research in Orange River covered a much wider range of phenomena than that done in Spanish Town, and more closely approximated a community study. The writer used similar field techniques as during the first session, but made more use of the directed interview. As planned, he put emphasis on Pocomania, traveling about with the group to ceremonies in other localities as well as observing local meetings and interviewing resident members. He studied the other cults and sects of the village as well, and gathered much information on secular aspects of Orange River culture.

The working hypothesis that religious affiliation will be related to sub-cultural orientation guided the collection and analysis of data. This involved the problem of selecting a variable along which to measure sub-cultural variation. Various kinds of analyses were possible, and the decision was essentially arbitrary within the limits set by the theoretical framework. The selection of socio-economic class as the independent variable rested on several considerations. Social class subsumes a considerable range of variation and correlates with numerous other aspects of culture. It has been used as a basis for many studies in the Caribbean as well as elsewhere, and in some cases has been analyzed in relation to religious phenomena.[11] These analyses provide a solid theoretical and methodological base and, further, have raised a number of interesting problems, some of which will be considered in this report. In addition, socio-economic class is relatively easy to define and measure empirically. Finally, the villagers recognize class distinctions and use them in their own interpretations of religious behavior.

Economic and sociometric criteria, which seem most significant to both social scientists and Jamaicans, were used to measure class status. The economic criteria included source and extent of income, amount of real property, utilization of income and wealth, and occupational status. The results obtained from this combination of criteria were checked by asking several informants direct questions about the class status of all persons in the sample, and seemed reliable. Sociometric information was used to supplement and extend economic data, which were not always readily accessible or very precise. Hypothesizing that persons will tend to associate most freely and extensively with others of similar status, the writer observed visiting patterns and other examples of informal interaction, and conducted sociometric interviews. Since the results of these techniques confirmed the hypothesis, he then used sociometric criteria to bring additional subjects, for whom economic data were inadequate, into the sample. These results, too, were checked by direct questioning and found to be reliable.

Data were collected on the basis of a sixfold division of social class used by the villagers themselves. The writer felt, however, that this system was too precise and complicated for purposes of the study, and so decided to halve the number of categories. The resulting threefold system is convenient, for it corresponds with the classification of religious groups in Orange River and with the tripartite division of social status found among the slaves and freedmen in the historical analysis.[12] It also provides a simple framework within which to trace the amount of influence exerted by Western civilization on the one hand and by the African-derived tradition on the other. The former affects high-status persons most noticeably, while the latter is strongest among the poorer folk. Analysis of the data involves abstracting the major cultural orientations and problems of persons in each social class and relating them to their religious affiliations, beliefs, and practices. The writer attempts also to analyze the interrelationships among the various sub-religions and to construct a system of them, utilizing the historical data as well wherever practicable.

The organization of the report follows an order just the reverse of that marking the research. The writer began his studies with urban Pocomania, moved later to the country and expanded his research to include other religious groups, and finally consulted the literature to trace the historical developments of these phenomena. The report begins with historical considerations, moves to a discussion of culture and religion in Orange River, and finally arrives in Spanish Town where the study began.

Chapter 2

EARLY ADAPTATIONS OF RELIGION IN JAMAICA

Introductory Statement

The growth of a seventeenth century European appetite for sugar and the consequent development of a West Indian industry to satisfy it had great effects upon the history of Jamaica. The English acquired the island by conquest from the Spanish in 1655, and in the interests of sugar production soon instituted a complete change in the composition of its population. The cultivation and processing of sugar cane in an area of open and undeveloped land resources required a large, controllable labor force, and this meant the establishment of forced labor. As Curtin puts it, "Within limits set by the social and political techniques of the time, . . . this was the only known way of keeping relatively large numbers of people at work on relatively small pieces of land, when these people are surrounded by plenty of good, unoccupied land" (Curtin, 1955: 22). Consequently, the English imported and put to work great numbers of African slaves, who passed their Old World traditions on to their Creole progeny. Slaves far outnumbered their masters, and since more than ninety per cent of modern Jamaicans are descended from them we may look to Africa for the origins of some aspects of Jamaican culture. The present chapter is concerned with tracing the African antecedents of

Jamaican religion and analyzing the changes in religion that occurred during the early period of slavery.

African Tribal Origins

The early sources offering information about slave origins refer repeatedly to certain tribes and make occasional estimates of their relative numerical importance. In combination, these sources provide a good general idea of the composition of the early Jamaican slave population.[1] Most of them agree that the "Eboes," who included the Ibo proper and other tribes from the Benin area of West Africa, formed the largest group. These people had low prestige among both slaves and masters, however, and may have had less cultural influence than their numbers would indicate. The early writers characterize them as being sickly, passive, poor laborers, and prone to melancholia and suicide. Ibibio-speaking peoples from the same general region, called "Mocoes," were also numerous but similarly devalued.

On the other hand the "Coromantees" from the Gold Coast, with representatives from Ashanti, Fanti, Akan, and neighboring tribes, achieved relatively great prestige and dominance. They appeared in large numbers and apparently had considerable cultural influence in Jamaica. Being "strong, intelligent, courageous and capable," many of them attained authoritative positions such as "drivers," or foremen, of the work gangs. They were also "proud, stubborn and rebellious," however, and when not given these positions of leadership resisted control by the masters. They allegedly instigated and led most of the slave revolts, and many escaped to join Maroon outlaw bands in the hills, where Ashanti survivals are said to remain strong even today.[2]

The "Papaws," from Dahomey and other Slave Coast tribes, were in great demand as excellent laborers. They apparently came to Jamaica in substantial numbers, but the extent of their cultural influence among the slaves is nowhere estimated. "Congoes," from various Congo Basin tribes, were also plentiful, although they were considered mediocre workers. Their contributions to Jamaican culture, too, remain unevaluated. "Angolas" and "Mungolas," including Ovimbundu and related peoples from farther south, had less numerical importance and were usually classed together with the "Congoes" as being of similar character and culture.

Fewer of the slaves came from the Senegal-Gambia area to the north of the Guinea Coast. Called "Mandingoes," they were mainly of the Mende, Timne, and Foulah tribes and included a few literate Moslems. The planters held them in high regard but preferred them for housework rather than field labor, thus limiting their influence among the other slaves. "Nagoes" from the Yoruba-speaking area of the Guinea Coast also remained few in number during the early period. They became more plentiful after the abolition of the slave trade, for they composed most of the contraband slave cargoes captured by the British and unloaded in Jamaican ports. They exerted some influence upon slave religion in later years, and their rituals still survive in certain Jamaican communities.[3] Slaves from other regions receive occasional mention in the literature, but they contributed negligibly to the population and culture of the island.

The Jamaican estates thus drew slaves from an area of Africa covering at least thirty degrees of latitude and including a great diversity of peoples and cultures. Ethnographic sources on the tribes mentioned show extensive variations in details of belief, ceremony, and religious organization among them, but closer examination of the data reveals certain patterns and principles common to the religions of all these peoples. We may expect these patterns and principles to be reflected in the beliefs and rituals of the early Jamaican slaves and to form the basis of religion among them.[4]

African Religious Patterns

These African peoples expended considerable amounts of time and energy in the practice of religion. A significant factor in their concern with religious matters was the cosmological premise that the material and spiritual aspects of the universe are closely interwoven, being in many respects hardly separable. Men and spirits, they believed, are irrevocably linked in a single social structure and depend upon one another for their well-being (Hambly, 1937: 570).

African supernatural beings were discrete entities, highly anthropomorphized, who influenced specific material events and interacted personally with particular individuals. Like human beings they had various needs, wants, preferences, and failings. When displeased they released their aggressions in destructive behavior, inflicting misfortunes and maladies upon men. They remained subject to the same ethical standards that regulated the behaviors of living persons, who thus characterized them and their actions on a moral continuum as relatively good or bad. Spirits having the power and the tendencies to inflict damage in areas of great interest and insecurity were the objects of greatest ceremonial activity, for they required more pacification than did weaker or more benevolent deities.

Just as spirits exerted control over material events, living persons were able to influence to some extent spiritual affairs. Spirits did, in fact, need human aid in satisfying many of their needs and desires, and they in turn aided those who helped them. The system was one of cooperation and reciprocity between persons and spirits in controlling natural and social phenomena in order to fulfill the requirements of all. Classifications of supernatural beings varied, but most Africans believed in a mythological creator who had few contemporary functions; various high gods who controlled major natural phenomena; ancestors; specialized spirits affecting only certain persons or places;

fetish spirits used for curing and magic; community deities responsible for the good of the society; and various demons, witches and ghosts who were wholly malevolent.

Along with the specializations of these different spirits went specialization in their worship. Persons in particular social groups or with similar interests and worries joined in the attempt to influence those gods who could help them most. African societies thus contained cults, each emphasizing the worship of a specific spirit or group of spirits, the total effect being one of cooperation to meet the needs and desires of all deities. The details of cultism varied among the different tribes, but several general classes of cults occurred in most of them.

Some cults were co-extensive in membership with kin or local groups in the society and functioned in terms of them. Persons became members of such cults through birth into the kin groups or communities. The ancestor cults formed the clearest examples of this type, and throughout much of Africa were probably the most extensive and important of all religious groups (Hambly, 1937: 556-65). Each ancestor cult was co-extensive with a particular unilineal kin group, the members of which worshiped their departed relatives. These deified ghosts in turn protected and aided their living descendants and interceded on their behalf with the higher gods. The head of the kin group became the high priest of the cult, the intermediary between living and dead, a position which enhanced his authority among the members. Every member became an ancestor after his death, provided the proper funeral rites enabled his shade to reach the land of the dead and thus confirmed this change of status. Without these rites the shade became a dispossessed ghost who terrorized the neighborhood and brought misfortune. Persons in most tribes had in addition to the shade other personal spiritual entities which sometimes governed their membership in other cults.

Some ancestor cults functioned on the community or society level. In the great West African states, for example, the ancestors of the king often constituted tribal deities who integrated the entire society. In the Congo where clan communities occurred the ancestor cult became the village church. Poro societies, community-wide men's groups in the Senegambia tribes, performed similar functions and operated much like the secret societies discussed below.

Associational cults with voluntary memberships constituted a second type of African religious group. Guild cults connected to crafts and professions fit this pattern, as did curing and divination societies which recruited new members automatically by performing special services for them. The high-god cults of the Guinea Coast also fall under this heading. Psychological factors probably had considerable significance in the recruiting of members for the latter, for the gods themselves initiated new members by possessing them. Initiations were quite complicated processes, sometimes lasting for years, and the priests had great spiritual powers.

Various temporary cults which arose under ascendant spirits for specific purposes, such as the witch-finding societies of the Guinea Coast, also belong in this category. Devoted to the apprehension of sorcerers and witches, they developed periodically under leaders who gained control of spirits with powers for detecting these enemies of society.[5] In the Congo, temporary cults of other kinds, some very like the high-god cults of Guinea except for their short lives, flourished under the leadership of fetish specialists who secured the services of particularly powerful spirits. The rise of such groups seems to be correlated with periods of widespread insecurity and social unrest. The polytheistic belief system promoted their development, for as culture changed the people could turn to obscure spirits for solutions to unfamiliar problems that became increasingly significant. The spirits who demonstrated their capabilities would gain in stature and new cults would form around them.

The African cult system fostered a high development of ceremonialism and religious specialization. Each cult had its own ceremonies and functions, which often became extremely elaborated. The knowledge and training of a cult priest was extensive, and being specific to particular spirits could not be generalized to other cults. This compartmentalization led to the attitude that spiritual knowledge was secret, and it was thus closely guarded. This attitude extended also to cult members, who tended to emphasize the importance of their own group at the expense of others. Such a situation implies both patterned variation in the belief system and a certain amount of group competition.

Specialists without cults also operated in African society, and it was among these curers, diviners, and magicians that secrecy and competition became most extensive. Cooperation occurred among the different classes of specialists, but rivalry was strong within each class. To the extent to which cult priests performed similar functions they participated in this rivalry. Each specialist used a fetish spirit which he had localized in an object and with which he had established a working partnership. The man fed the spirit and the latter performed various tasks ordered by the former. Fetish spirits also constituted personal guardians, and parts of their powers were often transferred to protective charms which were sold. In order to maintain his reputation and therefore his business, the practitioner had to advertise--to convince people of his power and ability to serve them. In so doing he drew attention from his competitors. Each had to guard his trade secrets jealously lest his special abilities lose their selling power. These individual specialists and their spirits constituted the nuclei of potential religious groups, as is demonstrated in the Congo where good advertisers were able to expand their operations and organize new cults.

Related to these common principles of belief and organization, consistently similar types of ritual behavior extended over the West African area. The anthropomorphized spirits were treated much as if they were living persons of high status. Major ritual techniques were designed to fill their very human needs and desires for such commodities as food, drink, shelter, gifts, and payment for services. Most spirits preferred blood as food, encouraging an emphasis on animal and sometimes human sacrifice to them. The spirits appreciated respectful treatment, and their devotees cultivated formalized behavior in their presence. Deities were fond of music and dancing, each having his own preferences in style, and consequently most cults made extensive use of these ritual techniques. Differences in the characters and requirements of spirits resulted in variations in behavior toward them. In some cases special practices such as the funeral rites enabling recently created ghosts to join their fellow ancestors were required.

Each cult housed its gods in a temple or shrine and conducted most social interaction with them at that place. This principle of localization applied to cultless spirits as well. Fetish spirits lived in portable objects, for example, and witches inhabited human bodies. Place spirits, who chose their own homes, were fed and placated at their residences which, like other religious objects, came to have sacred characters and magical uses. Reciprocal relationships again keynote the system--treat the spirit well and he will help you; use him harshly and he will hurt you.

African spirits who desired to manifest themselves materially typically possessed the bodies of their devotees, through whom they could verbally communicate their wishes and advice to other persons and in whom they could find esthetic satisfaction in song and dance. Diviners and curers often performed their occult tasks through possession also. In more realistic terms, trance was another major ceremonial technique among both cult members and individual religious specialists. Other common ritual patterns included gesturing, spiritual languages, medicine bundles, and the use of vegetable substances and amulets. These varied considerably among individuals, cults, tribes, and areas.

The African concern with religion as a pragmatic behavioral system placed high value on spirits and those who dealt with them. The competition between specialists and the consequent attitude of secrecy and mystery that pervaded much of the system resulted in great elaboration of techniques for solving particular kinds of problems. In spite of these wide variations in detail, the principles of belief, organization, and behavior were similar enough to enable communication among the members of different tribes who were thrown together in the Jamaican amalgam. They provided a solid foundation for the development of an Africanoid Jamaican religious system during the early slavery period.

Cultural Patterns of the Early Slaves

The slave trade intensified African warfare and slave raiding. The coastal states and tribes procured increasing numbers of victims by theft, purchase, and capture from their inland neighbors, who in turn replenished their supplies of human labor still farther from the coast (Herskovits, 1941: 34-40). Persons removed from their villages and kinsfolk were herded together with similar unfortunates from other societies, taken to the coastal slave factories, and shipped to the New World. Here they were sold individually to planters, "seasoned," or acclimated to the new conditions, and then put to work on the sugar estates (Pitman, 1926: 594; Edwards, 1806, II: 341-2).

Family, kin, and community ties were severed under the slave trade and could seldom be regained on the estates (Pitman, 1926: 633). Almost complete destruction of social organization resulted, and the long process of building a new one, adapted to slavery conditions, began. The English planters made no attempt to Europeanize their slaves, and left those patterns of belief and behavior that did not conflict with the slavery system to follow their own paths of development (Olivier, 1936: 88-91; Pitman, 1926: 651). The system did, however, impose limitations and force adaptations in many areas of culture, aiding the acculturation process by introducing new techniques, materials, and statuses. Although slavery promoted new anxieties and insecurities, it did away with some old ones, thus removing the functions of some cultural patterns and opening the way for the development of new traits. Still, the slaves based much of their new way of life on characteristics common to the cultures of their various tribes. Slave religion, which at first developed along African lines, accepting few Christian innovations, was strongly conditioned by the new culture and social organization that arose under the slavery system.

Jamaican estates were large and their headquarters widely separated, making the slave settlements spatially isolated from one another. On most estates the slave quarters stood at some distance from the administrative center and the planter's home, allowing little contact between field hands and their white masters. The slave village consisted of a number of small, thatched cabins situated in a grove of fruit trees. Each cabin housed a single nuclear family and there were no larger kin groups (Curtin, 1955: 19). The practice of selling and transferring individual slaves made stable extended families and unilineal kin groups impossible. Marriage had few controls or sanctions to insure its permanence, and the wife remained economically independent. A bilateral type of structure with impermanent families developed and the old African forms of organization faded from memory. With them went the ancestor complex as such, but the belief in the ability of the dead to influence the living remained, as did certain burial customs and the fear of malevolent ghosts. Community structure underwent marked change. The clanless and cultless white planters imposed rules of conduct from the outside, rendering non-functional the village and tribal aspects of religion.

African class structure, based in part on birth in ranked kin groups and in part on wealth, went the way of family and community organization. Slave society evolved a new class system tied to the work patterns of the estate. The slaves fell into three general occupational categories; house slaves, specialists, and field hands. House slaves received better treatment and more privileges than others and, being in constant contact with the whites, were more quickly acculturated. Although they lived in the slave village, they interacted little with the field hands, increasing the cultural disparity between these classes. They were chosen in part on the basis of light color, and interbreeding between their women and white men of the estate resulted in still lighter offspring, tending to perpetuate the class hereditarily. Their superiority to the field hands soon became associated with differences in skin color, and they began to reject African traits, putting value on the white man's culture and religion (Smith, 1953: 61-2; Curtin, 1955: 44-6; Hall, 1954: 157-8). More often manumitted than other slaves, they formed the nucleus of Jamaican free colored society, and achieved economic independence early. Their descendants, the Jamaican middle classes, still reject lower-class cultural patterns which they consider African.

The field hands occupied the lowest positions in the slave hierarchy. They had little social contact with the whites and were left to work out their own cultural patterns. They based the new system largely on African customs, conditioned by the requirements of slavery and supplemented by a few innovations trickling down through the house slaves and specialists. Their descendants became the lower classes--the laborers and peasants of modern Jamaica--who still exhibit African cultural survivals.

Between house slaves and field hands stood the specialists, including artisans, mechanics, and foremen or "drivers" of the work gangs. Their positions of authority and their practical skills made them the informal leaders of slave society (Pitman, 1926: 596-7). Having some contact with the whites, they were able to act as liason officers and make decisions that would not promote conflict between slaves and masters. Their authority at work thus became extended to leisure hours, and the field hands accepted them as natural leaders. They became the main agents of social control within the slave village (Stewart, 1823: 161-4; Curtin, 1955: 20-1).

One of these specialists, the medical assistant or "black doctor," deserves special mention. Most estates provided medical care and infirmaries or "hot houses" for their slaves, but doctors were few and had to serve several plantations. In their absence, an assistant from the slave ranks performed first aid, compounded and dispensed medicines, and cared for in-patients. He was also recognized as a specialist in the treatment of specifically Negro diseases, for which he used various root and herbal remedies --"bush medicines." Not being supervised in these activities, he sometimes utilized magical techniques in his cures (Phillippo, 1843: 263). His status and the results he obtained reinforced the belief in the efficacy of bush medicines and to a lesser extent in magical and spiritual curing. Survivals in this area of culture remain strong even today in Jamaica.

Members of the different African tribes formed distinct social groups in continual rivalry with one another on the estates. This lack of concerted effort was a major factor in the failures of slave revolts and other attempts at social betterment (Leslie, 1739: 327; Smith, 1953: 69). With new slaves being constantly imported to maintain the labor force, this situation kept alive many African beliefs and ideas until after emancipation, but did little to further their synthesis into a new culture. Such a synthesis did occur, but was effected by the Jamaican-born "Creole" group, which opposed all these tribal factions (Hall, 1959: 254-5; Madden, 1835, II: 196). This group became more and more influential through the years because of its increasing size, the greater familiarity of its members with the slave system, and the fact that it furnished a high proportion of persons chosen for authoritative positions. In spite of the rivalry between Creoles and Africans, there occurred extensive interaction between these groups which tended to effect a cultural synthesis among the slaves.[6] As the Creole group became stronger and the African forces weaker during later years, the negative attitude toward Africans spread. It is still reflected today in a general rejection of things considered African and in negative feelings about the more Africanoid religious cults.

Other social groups grew outside the pale of slavery--the escapees and the legally freed. Most of the latter appear to have gravitated to the centers of population and entered into selling and service occupations (Hall, 1954: 149-52). There they established a free colored society which became the nucleus of the post-emancipation middle class. Specialists who were able to purchase their freedom and manumitted house slaves continually reinforced this group. Other freedmen chose agriculture in the hills on land not claimed by the planters, setting the pattern of independent peasant cultivation that thousands of others followed after emancipation.

Escaped slaves fled to the inaccessible mountains of the east and to the formidable, limestone "cockpit" country of the western central plateau. There they joined former Spanish slaves who had intermarried with the few remaining Arawak Indians before the English conquest of the island, and became known as Maroons.[7] They formed small, isolated communities in these remote areas, remaining self-sufficient and subsisting on wild pigs and agricultural products, and declared themselves independent nations. They conclusively demonstrated their autonomy in two wars with the British and remain legally free of Jamaican control to this day. Many features of their culture and language retain recognizable Africanisms, and they still have non-Christian religious cults.[8]

Not even the slaves who remained on the estates became completely dependent on whites. The planter furnished his slaves with many of their necessities, but the lack of an independent farming population on the island and the high cost of importing foodstuffs made it economical for him to allow them time and land with which to grow their own staples. Thus developed the "provision ground" practice, whereby the slaves were allotted plots in which to grow

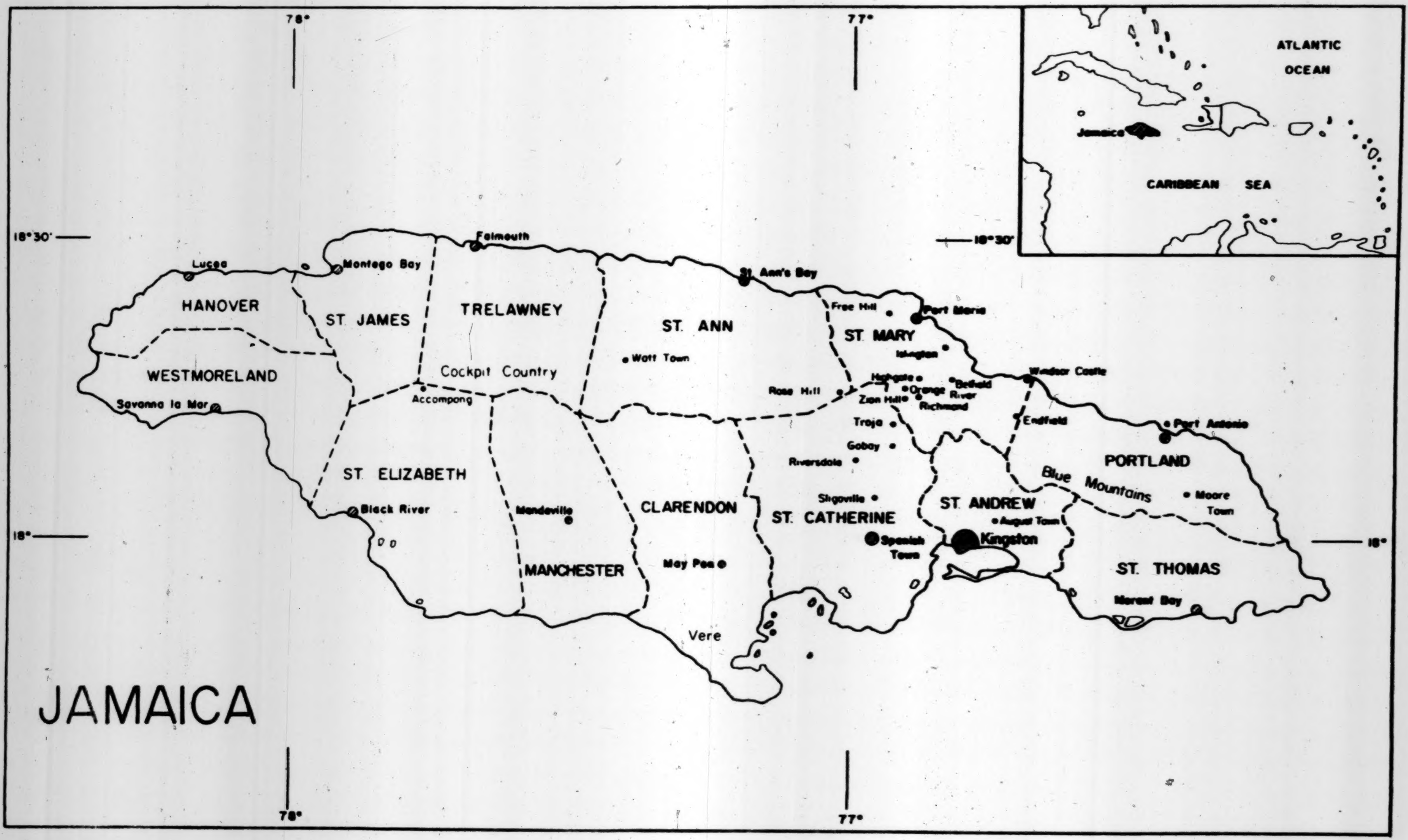


Fig. 1. Map of Jamaica, Showing Places Mentioned in the Text.

JAMAICA
78°
77°
18°30'
18°
ATLANTIC OCEAN
CARIBBEAN SEA
Jamaica
HANOVER
WESTMORELAND
ST. JAMES
TRELAWNEY
ST. ANN
ST. MARY
ST. ELIZABETH
MANCHESTER
CLARENDON
ST. CATHERINE
ST. ANDREW
PORTLAND
ST. THOMAS
Cockpit Country
Blue Mountains
Lucea
Montego Bay
Falmouth
St. Ann's Bay
Free Hill
Port Maria
Islington
Highgate
Orange River
Belfield
Zion Hill
Richmond
Rose Hill
Windsor Castle
Endfield
Port Antonio
Moore Town
Watt Town
Accompong
Savanna la Mar
Black River
Mandeville
May Pen
Vere
Troja
Gobay
Riversdale
Sligoville
Spanish Town
August Town
Kingston
Morant Bay

whatever foods they wished. Some appropriated extra unused land and not only supported themselves but also produced a surplus which they carried to the nearest village or town on Sundays to sell.[9] Thus motivated, the slaves kept alive their agricultural knowledge, maintained their self reliance, and perpetuated an independence of outlook (Mintz and Hall, 1960). The provision ground system consequently had great repercussions upon the later development of Jamaican culture, for it was a major factor in the mass migrations from the estates to free land following emancipation. It also enabled the early slaves to build a marketing mechanism and to evolve the first form of the present-day island-wide system of internal produce distribution (Mintz, 1955: 95-9; Gardner, 1909: 181; Olivier, 1936: 71-4, 158-63).

The Sunday markets served other functions than the merely economic, however, for they included many recreational and other leisure time activities. The towns thronged with people who made dancing, gambling, and other festivities the order of the day. Some of these activities had religious connotations, as will be discussed below. The Christian missionaries criticized them severely in later years, but many of the slaves apparently first learned about Christianity at the markets (Mintz, 1955: 96; Phillippo, 1843: 274-5). Being the only events in which slaves from different estates participated at frequent and regular intervals, the Sunday markets formed a main context of inter-estate diffusion, thus aiding the development of a unified Jamaican culture and serving an important integrative function for society.

Further opportunities for interaction of slaves from different estates were provided by the holidays that periodically punctuated the year-long sentence of hard labor. The seasonal nature of the sugar cane crop left short periods of comparative leisure at the end of the year after fall planting and in August when the crop was in. Two or three days leave were granted the slaves at each of these seasons, and a day or two in addition at Easter and at Whitsuntide. The slaves enjoyed themselves with music, dances, parades, and often religious ceremonies. Many of them visited other estates to participate in various recreational activities (Stewart, 1823: 260; Gardner, 1909: 99-100; Lewis, 1834: 24-6).

These, then, were some of the main social factors that conditioned the development of religion in early Jamaica. Little is known of the actual patterns of belief and religious organization during this period, as the slaves left no records. Some descriptions of ceremonies survive, as well as a few indications of ideological and structural forms, but always interpreted by white men who understood little of what they meant to the slaves and who wrote mainly subjective judgments about them. Curtin summarizes neatly the difficulties inherent in any analysis of early slave culture:

> "The caste separation of the blacks from the rest of society has helped make an uneven historical record in Jamaica. The blacks were illiterate and left no record of their own. The white and colored writers who left some record of Negro culture were cut off, as members of an alien culture, from understanding much of what they knew. They were more interested in indoctrinating the blacks with essential European techniques for saving souls and planting estates, than in understanding the culture of the Africans. The result is a sketchy, one-sided record, mainly touching Negro life only where it touched the life of the other castes. This defect necessarily carries over into any attempt to reconstruct a picture of the culture of the Jamaican slaves" (Curtin, 1955; 23).

Furthermore, since the early travelers and planter failed to sample their data and verify their observations, we cannot know the extent of participation in the ceremonies they describe. Neither can we judge whether the beliefs they mention were those of most of the slaves, of the members of one tribe or estate, or of only a few individuals. The following analysis of religion among the early Jamaican slaves, then, is necessarily limited.

Religious Beliefs and Ceremonies of the Slaves

As in other areas of culture, religion in its structural aspects was forced by the conditions of slavery to undergo extensive modification. However, the slaves retained many African beliefs, ritual forms, and organizational concepts, slowly developing a new synthesis of them. Not even the intense tribal rivalry on the estates effectively inhibited this blending, and while tribal religions no doubt preserved some unique features during the early years they lost their identity with the growth of the Creole population. Although the planters made no attempt to proselytize their slaves, a few Western religious elements also diffused into the system.

Concerning the influences of particular tribes in the development of this synthesis, Williams maintains that:

> "While the Ashanti formed only a comparatively small percentage of the whole slave population of Jamaica . . . they exercised such a dominance over the natives of all other tribes, that they forcibly imposed their culture on the entire mass, and effectively blotted out whatever manners and customs were at variance with their own" (Williams, 1934: 245).

It seems unlikely that the Ashanti, even with other Coromantee allies, could have exerted such extensive control. Indeed, Williams contradicts an earlier authority who said:

"The influence of the Coromantyns seems to have been modified, if not entirely obliterated, by whatever was introduced by other tribes" (Gardner, 1909: 184). A functional analysis of religious patterns common to the majority of Jamaican slaves and of cultural conditions that affected these patterns should be of greater value than any thesis postulating unilinear African survivals.

Data on the deities of the early slaves are extremely thin, and little can be said about them with confidence. Early sources make vague, deprecatory references to the worship of a devil and the neglect of a supreme being, but the writers apparently interpret these data in terms of their own beliefs and values (Leslie, 1739: 323; Stewart, 1808: 249). When we remember that most African "supreme beings" were simply mythological creators and that potentially dangerous spirits required assiduous propitiation, such statements take on clearer meaning. The "god" probably had little functional significance, while the "devil" may have referred to any of numerous important deities. Just which of these deities remained significant cannot be known. Under conditions of slavery, with major changes in social organization and the rise of new anxieties, many African gods became non-functional and faded from memory, while others gradually merged with those of other tribes and of the planters. Ceremonial behavior indicates, however, that general ideological principles such as the belief in supernatural causation of material events and the conviction that spirits interact with human beings continued to pervade slave religion.

Data on ritual forms are more abundant, although the sources seldom explain the purposes or referents of ceremonies and often fail to make clear to what extent they were religious. Some writers describe them as mere recreational dances, but others recognize their religious characters and indicate the presence of possession in them. During the early period different tribal groups held separate ceremonies and formed distinct religious congregations (Leslie, 1739: 326; Sloane, 1707: lvi; Stewart, 1823: 260; Williams, 1827: 22). These ceremonies occurred on the estates at night, particularly on Saturdays, and at the Sunday markets. They consisted of dances of various kinds, usually involving precise bodily movements and posturing, accompanied by music from African instruments and vocal choruses. They often became quite emotional, and the whites, of course, called them "licentious."[10]

More extensive rites took place during the August "crop-over" holidays and at Christmas and New Year's. Perhaps the most spectacular of them, the John Connu festival at Christmas, originated on the Gold Coast during the sixteenth century as a recreational event but may have had religious overtones (Long, 1774, II: 424-5). As performed in Jamaica it consisted at first of Coromantee groups, gaily costumed, dancing through the streets to the accompaniment of vocal and instrumental music and stopping at each house for refreshments and gifts. The chief figure, John Connu, wore an elaborate headdress and brandished a large wooden sword. Later the event became more elaborate, and by 1769 new groups had appeared, "the Ebos, the Papaw, etc. having their respective Connus, male and female, who were dressed in a very laughable style."[11] Some parades involved extensive sexual symbolism and amusingly obscene costumes and antics. The greatest elaborations occurred in the towns, but some groups traveled from estate to estate in the country. The custom still survives in some parts of Jamaica, but has lost whatever religious elements it once had.

The planters at first relaxed estate discipline on holidays and gave their workers considerable freedom. During the eighteenth century, however, they began to fear that the emotional and noisy slave gatherings promoted the instigation of insurrections and that the music of drums and conch shells involved signals for revolt. They consequently prohibited inter-estate slave assemblies and curtailed much of this ceremonial and festive activity.[12] More restricted and specific religious events such as funeral rites were left to evolve their own adaptations to Jamaican culture. These involved ancestral beliefs and held great significance for the slaves.

While the African ancestor cults as such could not survive under the unstable family conditions engendered by slavery, many of their features continued to influence the behaviors and attitudes of individuals. A vivid illustration of this was the practice, especially prevalent among the Ibo, of committing suicide so that the soul could fly back to Africa and join the ancestors. The planters quite naturally discouraged such actions, but the African-born slaves retained the associated beliefs and continued to welcome death (Leslie, 1739: 323-4; Sloane, 1707: xlviii; Stewart, 1808: 249-50). This attitude faded as the Creole population grew, but neither slavery nor the decline of Africans dispelled the basic ideological principle of ancestor worship--the premise that the dead continue to intervene in the affairs of the living (Stewart, 1823: 279; Pitman, 1926: 652). Specific patterns associated with this premise underwent extensive modifications as they adapted to changing social and cultural conditions, but the principle itself remained highly significant.

During the early period the tribal groups on the estates maintained their cohesion, and some may have continued to worship the old tribal ancestral deities. Others may have acquired ancestral properties in themselves and developed their own ancestors much like the community gods of the Congo. The fact that religious ceremonies, including funeral rites, were usually confined to tribal groups tends to support these conjectures, although no direct data confirm them. Further support may be seen in a consistent emphasis given by the slaves to the benevolence of ghosts of relatives and friends, for with the intense tribal rivalries a person's friends and relatives remained primarily within his own faction (Lewis, 1834: 50; Long, 1774: 416). Later, when tribal affinities lost their importance, ancestor worship apparently became restricted largely to the family and close relatives of the deceased. Gardner mentions that the slaves made a practice of gathering around the graves of kinsmen and offering them first fruits and blood sacrifices to insure their good will. Indeed, he goes so far as to state that "the tutelary deities included the departed heads of families, and the worship of such was almost the only one observed to any great extent by Africans or their descendants in Jamaica."[13]

The most revealing ancestral rites, however, took place in connection with death and burial. As in Africa, funerals were designed to pacify the soul of the deceased so that he would not molest his survivors and to send him to join his fellows. The ceremony commenced with a wake, at which the survivors sang, danced, drummed, and perhaps played games and drank. This usually continued the whole night, taking place in the dead person's yard. The burial occurred the following evening, but only after the deceased had cleared up his affairs. He did this on the way to the grave, forcing his bearers to stop and collect money from those who owed him or to scold those who had mistreated him. Gardner describes the proceedings quaintly:

> ". . . the dead man could not, as a rule, go quietly to his last resting-place, unless all outstanding matters were adjusted. . . . Slanders spoken against him, or injuries not yet redressed, were now publicly proclaimed. . . . Woe to the man who owed anything to the estate of the departed. No matter what superhuman efforts the bearers seemed to make, the corpse was obstinate, and would not go past the residence of the delinquent. A living dun is usually a very inconvenient visitor, but what can a man do with a dead one?" (Gardner, 1909: 385).

Once at the grave, the bearers lowered the coffin and the mourners sacrificed food to the deceased. Sometimes they went through a ritual of "catching the shadow" and burying it separately in a small coffin of its own to insure its rest. Most observers describe these funerals as wild and orgiastic, with much singing, drinking, dancing, and drumming which often lasted through the night. The death room was left undisturbed for nine nights, and a light kept burning and food and drink available for the soul. Relatives sometimes held additional ceremonies each night during this period, and usually had a final wake, or "nine-night," at the end of it. The surviving spouse wore mourning for about a month and could then remarry.[14]

The shades of departed friends and relatives, properly dismissed by such funeral rites, seldom harmed their survivors. Ancestors might punish their descendants, but only for constructive purposes. The ghosts of enemies and strangers, on the other hand, could be quite dangerous and were greatly feared (Lewis, 1834: 978; Long, 1774, II: 416; Stewart, 1808: 279). Tribal differences and rivalries may have increased this fear, for enemies belonged to other groups whose burial practices seemed strange and improper. Moreover, newly imported slaves died by the hundreds and often could not be given adequate funerals (Phillips, 1949: 546; Stewart, 1823: 250-1). Consequently ghosts, or "duppies," grew more numerous and became increasingly significant as explanations of misfortunes and troubles. They formed convenient scapegoats for the anxieties and tensions engendered by slavery and not provided for by African cultural patterns. Belief in duppies thus furnished an outlet for tensions, but it also generated anxieties. As time went on ghost-fear grew and expanded, gradually replacing concern over other kinds of malevolent spirits.

Place spirits, termed "jumbies," survived for a time in Jamaican belief, but never became very important. Smith states that they occurred as late as 1820 (Smith, 1953: 70), but by this time the emphasis definitely centered on ghosts and no references to jumbies appear for later dates. In Africa place spirits seem to have been products of generations of continuous residence in given localities. Traditions arose that certain places, perhaps the scenes of forgotten tragedies, were inhabited by evil spirits and dangerous to people. The slaves in Jamaica, who were set down in unfamiliar habitats and moved from estate to estate, apparently never developed such traditions. Lacking close integration and communication, their communities did not foster the association of particular spirits with specific trees, pools, and other physiographic features. Only the water spirits survived, and even they lost their individual identities to become generalized mermaids.[15] Other African spirits, such as those who dwelt in the sacred Ceiba, or giant silk-cotton trees, were displaced by wandering duppies in search of homes. Thus the Jamaican Ceiba has from the early period to the present been feared as a residence of ghosts.[16] Also, particularly malevolent types of duppies replaced the demons of Africa. These were the ghosts of sorcerers and other feared and hated persons, those of the victims of untimely or violent deaths, and those of butchers, corpse-handlers, and others who dealt in killing and death (Banbury, 1894: 23-5; Williams, 1934: 159-62).

African ancestor beliefs thus came to have extensive repercussions in Jamaica, although they underwent great permutations under conditions of slavery. With the passage of time the beliefs and practices relating to the dead emphasized less and less the positive aspects of ancestor worship and more and more the negative features of ghost fear. Jamaican slaves apparently became almost obsessed with death and its troublesome effects upon the living. Ghosts came to have even greater significance than indicated above, for they became centrally involved in sorcery and in organized religious movements as well. Indeed, belief in them pervaded all aspects of Jamaican religion during the early period of slavery.

Obeah and Myalism

African fetish specialists were enslaved along with laymen and continued to ply their trades in Jamaica, where they were termed "Obeah men" and their practices "Obeah." They represented an accepted method of predicting and controlling certain anxiety-producing phenomena. In the relatively stable African cultures these men had definite rôles to play and functions to serve. With slavery came a new set of problems and anxieties, unsolvable by technological means, and it was natural that the Obeah men should meet them with magic. With the development of such disruptive factors as tribal rivalries, factionalism between Africans and Creoles and between field hands and house slaves, envy of drivers and artisans, and the instability of the family, it is not surprising that the practice of Obeah increased markedly in Jamaica. If sorcery, or black magic, were an accepted way of dealing with personal problems resulting from such social insecurities, we might expect this aspect of Obeah to increase as well. Whether or not it did, it is certain that fear of sorcery was markedly intensified (Madden, 1835, II: 105). As in Africa, people tended to blame sorcerers for certain personal misfortunes, and accusations of sorcery served as aggression-releasing mechanisms. The belief in, or fear of, black magic provided a conceptual system for rationalizing insecurities and interpreting anxiety-producing social situations, quite apart from whether or not it was actually practiced. As anxiety and insecurity increased under the conditions of slavery, then, fear of sorcery became magnified. Tribal rivalries and the unfamiliarity of each group with the magical practices of the others may have augmented this fear. The Ibos trusted their own Obeah men, perhaps, but suspected Ashanti Obeah men of destructive magic. The strange techniques used by the latter would confirm this belief.

The practice of Obeah became intimately associated with the belief in and fear of ghosts. Not only did the Obeah men have the task of dispelling troublesome duppies, but they also came to use ghosts as assistants in performing this task (Pitman, 1926: 652). In Africa the fetish specialists recruited supernatural help largely from the ranks of nature spirits. Those who were enslaved did the same at first in

Jamaica, but as such beings became fewer and less significant in slave belief the Obeah men sought more and more aid from shades of the dead. A belief that malevolent ghosts could be fought best by other duppies may have strengthened this tendency. The rise of ghost fear in combination with the use of ghosts in Obeah augmented the fear of sorcery, for the belief that ghosts are normally malicious supported the idea that persons who deal with them might also have destructive aims. The Obeah men of rival tribal groups would have been especially suspect, for they utilized the dupplies of their own tribesmen whom other groups considered particularly diabolical. At any rate, ghost fear and sorcery fear reinforced each other. As duppies acquired worse reputations Obeah men were called upon more frequently to counteract them. The increased use of Obeah intensified the fear of sorcery and this in turn heightened anxieties about ghosts.

In time, fear of ghosts and sorcerers replaced that of witches, who slowly faded from the belief system.[17] In many African societies the distinction between witches and sorcerers was apparently vague, and in addition belief in them served similar psychological functions, so that such substitution would not be difficult. Whatever the factors in this replacement, it had important implications in the development of Jamaican religious movements and cults. Several of these religious organizations resembled the witch-finding cults of Africa and arose under similar circumstances, but they were directed against ghosts and sorcers rather than against witches. The first of them originated during the early period of slavery, and has become the subject of conflicting and confusing theories.

The literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries contains an increasing number of references to a religious movement called "Myalism" (Long, 1774, II: 416; Lewis, 1834: 158; Gardner, 1909: 191). The earlier writers describe it as an outgrowth of Obeah, while later authors call it an anti-sorcery movement. Many present-day analysts have been confused by the interpretation of Joseph Williams, who identifies Obeah with sorcery. Assuming that the earlier writers were wrong, Williams maintains that Obeah and Myalism were opposed from the start and changed little if at all through time. Basing his analysis on the theory of unilinear Ashanti survivals, he arrives at the following conclusion.

> "Strictly speaking myalism, the direct antithesis of obeah, is the residue of the old religious dance of the Ashanti, just as obeah itself is the continuation of Ashanti witchcraft. Thus obeah is secretive, malicious, and has gradually taken on a form of devil-worship. Myalism, on the contrary, is practised in the open. It is beneficient in its purposes. . . . In practice, how-

> ever, the same individual is now frequently an obeah-man by night and a myal-man by day when he "digs up" the very obeah which he has planted while exercising the other role." (Williams, 1934: 59).

In brief, Williams' theory is this. Obeah, being secretive and evil in intent, continued unabated through the slavery period, while Myalism, devoted to the worship of a supreme being through organized cult activity, was driven underground by early legislation against slave assemblies. The Myal priests were consequently forced to adopt the techniques of Obeah, although they continued to hold dances in secret. While remaining opposed to each other in principle, the two systems became allied in their common fight against the white regime. This led to a confusion in their practices, for the Obeah men appropriated some of the functions of Myal leaders. After emancipation, Myalism again asserted itself and made open war on Obeah. However, Obeah men infiltrated the Myal organization, leading it to excesses which made it as great an evil as Obeah itself. Later Myalism joined forces with Christian revivalism, which finally absorbed it and still carries on the battle against Obeah and devil worship (Williams, 1934: 245-50).

Williams' interpretations take unwarranted liberties with the data and paint a distorted picture of the development of Jamaican folk religion. They are quite clearly conditioned by his own acceptance of the dualistic Christian assumption of opposing good and evil forces. This becomes evident in his unsubstantiated conclusion that whole masses of Jamaicans, like the European witches of a few centuries ago, worship the devil and seek only to harm their fellows. Re-examination of the data reveals quite a different picture of the origin and development of Myalism.

There is no indication in the early literature that any great proportion of Obeah men were Ashanti or that their activities were predominately anti-social, as Williams would have us believe. On the contrary, most sources agree that they came from different African societies and that they were curers and diviners as well as sorcerers. For example:

> "The negroes in general, whether African or Creoles, revere, consult, and fear them; to these oracles they resort, and with the most implicit faith, upon all occasions, whether for the cure of disorders, the obtaining revenge for injuries or insults, the conciliating of favour, the discovery and punishment of the thief or the adulterer, and the prediction of future events."[18]

There is no doubt that the Obeah men of Jamaica were simply transported African fetish specialists. They appeared in large numbers, and several of them practiced on every large estate. At first there were probably as many different kinds of Obeah as there were tribes, but diffusion gradually reduced the variations until in 1820 Obeah could be called "a compound magical system into which certain practices of various slaves entered as components" (Smith, 1953: 70). Obeah men apparently specialized, for one observer tells us that they cured by sucking, another that they used herbs, a third that they concentrated on protecting fields and catching thieves, and a fourth that they were mainly diviners.[19]

The planters were at first amused at Obeah, but later came to consider it a set of superstitions that meant only trouble. Their apprehensions derived partly from the deaths allegedly caused by Obeah Men through poison and fear, but even more from the realization that Obeah played a major integrative role in slave revolts. They discovered during the course of putting down the famous Tacky Rebellion of 1760 that Obeah men had administered a fetish oath to the participants to make them impervious to white men's weapons and thus aid their decision to revolt. This discovery prompted the first law prohibiting the practice of Obeah, passed the same year, and was also the first indication of the existence of Myalism (Edwards, 1860, II: 296-306; Phillippo, 1843: 249; Williams, 1932: 114-15; 1934: 79-9; Pitman, 1926: 653-4). The fetish oath had been administered for other purposes as well, for example in the detection of thieves,[20] but its use in the instigation of revolts against the masters required group organization and led to the formation of the Myal society. Edward Long, the first writer to refer to this movement by name, says:

> "Not long since, some of these execrable wretches in Jamaica introduced what they called the Myal dance, and established a kind of society, into which they invited all they could. The lure hung out was, that every Negro, initiated into the Myal society, would be invulnerable by the white man, and although they might in appearance be slain, the Obeah man could, at his pleasure, restore the body to life" (Long, 1774, II: 416; cf. Gardner, 1909: 191).

The ceremony consisted of a dance in which the members of the society participated, singing and stamping their feet. During the dance the Obeah man, or in this context the Myal man, ritually administered to the initiate a drug which induced a coma. He then went out to the bush and obtained an antidote which he applied a few hours later with various gestures and spells to the apparently lifeless victim, who subsequently awakened. The Myal man thus symbolically killed the initiate and then revived him.[21]

It is evident, if the sources are valid (and there is no evidence to the contrary), that Myalism grew out of Obeah and became an organized cult. How and why it developed this organization, however, remains open to interpretation. Williams' hypothesis that it represented the survival of a former African cult is plausible, since the whites of the period would have considered cult leaders Obeah men. It could also have resulted from the coalescence of similar cults from several African societies. More probably it was an emergent movement with roots in the anxieties engendered by slavery and in beliefs and practices common to large numbers of slaves. Similar cults, we remember, arose from time to time both on the Guinea Coast and in the Congo.

As evidenced by several major insurrections and numerous minor revolts and conspiracies, the period that marked the rise of Myalism was one of general unrest and acute dissatisfaction among the slaves (Madden, 1835, II: 104-6, 248-9). It was also a period of reprisals and executions designed to quell current rebellions and discourage future ones. To slaves who became involved in conspiracies or who shared the urge to revolt, the promise of invulnerability to the white man's weapons must have been a powerful inducement to join the cult. Furthermore, the administration of the fetish oath, an integral part of initiation into the society, discouraged informers through fear of supernatural punishment. In short, Myalism apparently arose as a nativistic movement aimed at the destruction of the slavery system.

By the turn of the century the Myal cult had taken on definite form and had become differentiated from Obeah proper. Obeah remained individualistic and non-social in character, while Myalism emphasized the social aspects of religion. The Myal man, although he usually continued to practice Obeah, became the leader of an organized group of people who united in a common endeavor, using religious means to attain their goals. As the emancipation movement grew stronger and the goal of freedom came more clearly in sight, the Myal movement waned. It did not die out, but remained dormant during the transformation of Jamaica to a free society. After emancipation, during the trying period of social reorganization, it again emerged, changed in form but again as a specific movement tied to the anxieties of the times. It arose in a fight, not against Obeah as such but against malevolent ghosts and sorcerers. Post-emancipation Myal groups resembled closely the witch-finding cults of the Guinea Coast, but also took on the characteristics of Christian revivalism. This recrudescence of Myalism, which took place after a series of social changes directly related to the Christian missionary movement will be discussed later in its proper context.

Summary and Transition

African influences clearly operated in the early development of religion in Jamaica. Specific behavioral and material forms did survive in slave culture, but the most significant retentions were the basic principles common to many African religions. Jamaican slaves built their first religious institutions upon these aspects of the African world view, adapting particular beliefs and rituals to their changed socio-cultural conditions and evolving new forms to meet their new needs (cf. Simpson and Hammond, 1960). Thus, while they retained the idea that men and spirits interact, they altered the techniques of interaction and their conceptions of the spirits involved. Ancestor cults and other religious organizations ceased to exist as distinct systems, but other groups such as the Myal cult, based on the same principles, evolved.

The religious customs of different African societies remained distinct during the earliest years of slavery because the slaves formed rival tribal groups. In time, however, came diffusion and synthesis of these discrete customs. As the Creole population grew, new religious complexes developed, adapting to Creole culture and evolving solutions to Creole problems. The Myal movement, for example, constituted a militant response to slavery conditions and a method of attacking problems arising from them. Subcultures developed within Jamaican society and prevented full religious integration (cf. Hall, 1954: 149-52). Thus, the Maroons evolved their own religion, and the house slaves rejected many African patterns in favor of the white man's beliefs and practices.

African influences remained important until many years after the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, but long before this date a new set of factors had begun to induce changes in culture and religion among the slaves. These fzctors were introduced from Europe and America by Protestant Christian missionaries. The missionaries had made themselves felt in some areas by the beginning of the nineteenth century, and thereafter exerted increasing influence over the slaves and their religion. The following chapter deals with this influence and its effects.

Chapter 3

RELIGIOUS ACCULTURATION IN JAMAICA

Introductory Statement

The previous chapter discussed the African origins of Jamaican religion and described the changes that occurred in it during the eighteenth century. These developments involved two main processes; the integration of features from various tribal religions into a more or less unified system and the adaptation of religious patterns to a new sociocultural environment. The present chapter deals with the acculturation of religion itself rather than with its adaptation to the results of acculturation in other parts of culture. Religious acculturation began in Jamaica around the start of the nineteenth century, when Protestant Christian missionaries initiated intensive campaigns to proselytize the slaves. This altered the situation radically, for the missionaries introduced new religious principles as well as particular ideological and ceremonial items. Because the more salient innovations entered Jamaica from the outside during this period, religious change can no longer be interpreted simply as adaptation and integration. The processes of diffusion and Afro-Christian syncretism also become important. These two processes eclipsed adaptation during the first half of the century, but the latter again became significant upon the reorganization of culture that followed emancipation.

The competition of two religious systems within a single society raises the problem of distinguishing between religious ideas and ideas about religion. The slaves developed a strong value on being Christian during the emancipation movement and joined the churches in great numbers. This acceptance of "Christianity," however, tells us little about the extent to which Christian values and ideas were internalized. Membership in a church did not necessarily imply espousal of the Christian world view--many devout converts retained African ways of thinking and simply rephrased their old beliefs in Christian terms.

The Rise of Christian Influence

During the early period of Jamaican history the slaves learned no more about the religion of the white man than the latter learned of theirs. The Anglican clergymen devoted their labors almost entirely to white people, and slaves were not allowed to attend church (Olivier, 1936: 85-94). Most planters ignored the laws directing them to instruct their slaves in Christianity. As Gardner says, "the slaves, with very few exceptions, were left in heathen darkness. Here and there some member of a planter's family might be found labouring to impart religious instruction to a few favoured domestics, but such cases were rare" (Gardner, 1909: 199). The Anglican ministers performed a few baptisms and marriages among slaves in some parishes, but they seldom accompanied these rites with Christian teachings.

Despite this disinclination to proselytize the slaves, certain aspects of Christianity penetrated Negro culture through informal channels. The house slaves, being in close contact with the whites and eager to learn European ways, accepted Christianity more quickly and fully than did the field hands. It was largely through these domestics that Christian ideas--and ideas about Christianity--reached the latter. Even the house slaves, however, learned only isolated elements of the white man's religion, adding them after modification to their own religious system. The field hands, receiving these patterns second-hand, reinterpreted them still further and buried them still deeper in the Africanoid world view.

To the slaves Christianity was the Obeah of the white man, similar in character to their own but more powerful. Obeah itself had no effect upon whites and conversely could not be used to benefit them. Christianity, on the other hand, could aid the slaves. Baptism, considered an initiation into the cult of the masters, became generally accepted as the best possible protection against sorcery and the slaves consequently placed a premium upon it. Moreover, baptized slaves could take oaths on the Bible, which apparently had less drastic effects when broken than did Obeah oaths. Lewis displays rare insight in describing these ideas.

> "The whole advantages to be derived by negroes from becoming Christians, seemed to consist with them in two points; being a superior species of magic itself, it preserved them from black Obeah; and by enabling them to take an oath upon the Bible to the truth of any lie which it might suit them to tell, they believed that it would give them the power of humbugging the white people with perfect ease and convenience. . . . They were perfectly ready to 'buss the book,' which they considered as a piece of bukra [white man's] superstition, mighty useful to the Negroes."[1]

The slaves thus conceived of Christianity not as an alternative religious system, but as a set of supernatural techniques and ideas supplementary to their own which could be put to various useful purposes. Such interpretations remained dominant throughout most of Jamaica well into the nineteenth century. Missionaries began to change these conceptions in the latter part of the eighteenth century, but it was not until the 1820's that Christian ideas and practices became significant elements of slave culture.

The missionary movement and the drive for emancipation of slaves were closely interrelated in England and Jamaica. The sectarian bodies that had separated from the Church of England during the religious revival of the seventeenth century led both of these movements, and in so doing incurred the hostility of the Jamaican whites, who were not yet "enlightened." The same factors that led the planters to oppose and restrict the missionaries, however, induced the slaves to give them wholehearted support and enabled them to exert considerable influence on Jamaican culture and religion.

Missionary activity in Jamaica began in the parish of St. Elizabeth in 1754, when three Moravian preachers opened missions on the estates of two absentee landlords who had requested them to instruct their slaves in Christian principles. They met a warm reception from the slaves, but were very strict in their requirements for membership and refused to interfere in any way with relations between slaves and masters. As a result the slaves lost their early enthusiasm, and by 1800 only 938 of them had joined the church. Although they expanded more rapidly later, the Moravians never extended their influence much beyond St. Elizabeth, Westmoreland, and some neighboring localities.[2]

The next persons to spread Christianity in Jamaica were not missionaries at all, but slaves and former slaves themselves. The first of these arrived in Jamaica in 1783 as slaves of American loyalists who had fled from the United States after the revolution. One, a George Lisle (sometimes written Leile), a converted Baptist, won his freedom and began preaching in Kingston. He drew large crowds, and despite attack from the whites succeeded in building a sizeable congregation of slaves and freedmen (Gardner, 1909: 343). Some of his converts split with him and began preaching independently in different parts of the island, becoming the first "Native Baptists." The most prominent of them was Moses Baker, also from America, who preached his version of Lisle's doctrine to several thousand eager listeners in St. James. Another, George Gibb, worked in St. Mary, and a former American slave named George Lewis expounded a variant doctrine in the hills of Manchester. The term "Native Baptist" later came to denote any independent congregation led by a Negro preacher, including groups that split off from established sects. Lisle himself appears to have had fairly orthodox views, although he practiced such odd rites as foot-washing. Baker added a few new ideas, although he adhered basically to Lisle's teachings. Other Native Baptist leaders deviated more widely, combining African and Christian ideas and finally evolving a unique, syncretic religious system.[3]

A third denomination entered the field in 1789, when Dr. Coke of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society opened a church in Kingston. Others of this sect followed him, and in spite of opposition by the whites succeeded in converting some 600 persons by the end of the century. The Wesleyans did some work among estate slaves but concentrated their activities in the towns, drawing most of their members from the free colored class. Their tendency to remain neutral did not detract from white opposition to them, however, and their unwillingness to ally with the slaves against the planters damaged their status among the slaves. Consequently the more militant Baptists, although they came late to Jamaica, soon surpassed the Wesleyans in membership.[4]

The first Baptist missionaries arrived in 1814 in answer to a request from Moses Baker, who was having trouble keeping his congregation together (Waddell, 1863: 25). They recruited their first followers from this congregation, but soon moved on to virgin material. Other Baptist missionaries soon followed, and by 1822 were operating at least five large stations in different parts of the island. In contrast to the Moravians, the Baptists readily accepted candidates for membership, growing rapidly in numbers and spreading quickly over most of the island. Unlike the Wesleyans, they concentrated on converting slaves and sided with them in disputes against the white aristocracy. Such practices served to establish the Baptist church as the most influential in Jamaica, but they also focused the hostility of the planters upon Baptist missionaries.[5] One factor in the rapid growth of the Baptists was their adoption of the "class-and-leader" system of organization used by their Negro predecessors. They subdivided their followers into local classes and appointed over each a slave leader, who was responsible for all class members and reported to the missionary in charge on their conduct. Leaders conducted services and prayer meetings in the missionary's absence. This system enabled Baptist missionaries to extend their influence over wide areas and to expand their membership quite rapidly, but it also facilitated Afro-Christian syncretism among the slaves. The Wesleyans used a similar system, but to a more limited extent.[6]

Other denominations joined in the competition for slave converts during the 1820's, and still others later. Of these only the Presbyterians, who arrived in 1823 and worked mainly on the North Coast, became influential, and even they lagged far behind the Baptists and Wesleyans. Like the Moravians they stressed quality rather than quantity in their proselytization, refusing to accept candidates until they showed proof of true conversion. They attempted the class-and-leader system at one time, but later rejected it in favor of more strict supervision of their congregations (Waddell, 1863: 111-14). From 1820 until about 1845 missionary activity and influence expanded rapidly. According to Phillippo, by 1841 church membership, not including Native Baptists or Anglicans, had reached 100,000, about a third of the slave population. He estimated some 30,000 of these to be Baptists and about 23,000 Wesleyans (Phillippo, 1843: 290-1). As missionary influence increased, however, so did opposition from the planters.

Fear of slave revolts constituted a major factor in the planters' hostility toward missionaries. A number of rebellions and conspiracies during the late eighteenth century, followed by a war with the Maroons and news of the Haitian revolution, brought tensions to a peak at the beginning of the nineteenth. The missionaries, being spreaders of dangerous ideas about the equality of men, became convenient scapegoats. As one observer notes, "at that period the very name of Methodist or other sectarian missionary created suspicion, hostility, and alarm. His motions were strictly watched, he was opposed, abused, and insulted. He was viewed as a dangerous intruder." (Stewart, 1823: 286; cf. Gardner, 1909: 330; Williams, 1827: 36-9). The planters prohibited missionaries from visiting their estates, attacked them physically, jailed them for preaching sedition, and destroyed their chapels.

The growth of the emancipation movement constituted a further threat to the security of the planters. As Parliament came out more strongly in favor of abolition and as sugar prices steadily decreased, tensions among both masters and slaves mounted. Anxieties reached a new peak in 1831 when the new Whig reform government in England launched a full scale attack on slavery, and they culminated at the end of the year in a major slave rebellion in the western parishes. Some Baptist class leaders came to believe that they had been legally freed and attempted to organize a strike which would force the planters to recognize their new status. The plan miscarried, however, and unknown to the missionaries themselves the Baptist organization became centrally involved in an insurrection known later as the Baptist War. It set off a new series of attacks on the missionaries and forced many of them to suspend their activities for a time.[7]

The great drop in church membership after this rebellion, while due in part to fear of reprisals, indicates the failure of the Baptist missionaries to make true Christians of their followers. The slaves, it seems, had ulterior motives for joining the churches and avowing conversion.

> "The wide-spread defection from the profession and practice of piety, over nearly all the disturbed parishes, during the period now under review, shows how empty the profession of it was during the previous period. . . . It seemed obvious that many churches and congregations had been swelled by a host anticipating freedom, who, now that their hopes were disappointed, fell away. It was common for a backslider to answer an exhortation thus:--'It is no use, minister; what can church and prayers do for we again?'" Waddell, 1863: 70-1).

This does not mean that Christianity had only superficial influence upon all the slaves. Some perhaps used church membership mainly as a means to an end, hoping that their support of the missionaries would speed freedom, but others accepted Christian teachings. The value on being Christian, however, progressed more rapidly than did the internalization of Christian values. The latter was subject to many factors among different groups of slaves.

The Afro-Christian Continuum

Missionary activities produced wide variations in religious patterns among the slaves. Some accepted Christianity more fully than others, and many who did become practicing Christians retained pagan beliefs and rites. The total picture of Jamaican Negro religion on the eve of emancipation can be summarized as a continuum reaching from orthodox Christianity at one end to Africanoid religion at the other. Several factors contributed to this variation. First, missionaries were few in number and distributed unevenly about the island. They missed some areas entirely and worked but intermittently in others. Some slaves thus had direct, continuous contact with them and could learn much of the new religion, while others, having only indirect or sporadic relations with them, could acquire only isolated elements of Christianity and these often reinterpreted.

Differences in proselytization methods also promoted variations. In general, Presbyterians and Moravians worked continuously and intensively with limited numbers of prospective members and demanded conclusive evidence of conversion. Their converts were fewer but learned more of Christianity than did Baptist and Wesleyan adherents. However, such concentration of activity left surrounding areas largely untouched, allowing non-Christian cults to flourish. The Baptists and Wesleyans, in contrast, tried to convert as many heathens as possible and spent less time and effort with each of them. They accepted as members persons who had learned little of Christianity--often little more than the Lord's Prayer and the ten commandments (Gardner, 1909: 334, 358; Curtin, 1955: 33-4). Their converts tended to reinterpret Christian ideas and incorporate them into the African world view rather than to replace the old system of thought with the new one.

The class-and-leader system, especially as used by the Baptists, reduced direct contacts between missionaries and converts and increased this trend. Baptist missionaries relied heavily on their leaders, giving them key positions for determining the extent and direction of religious acculturation. The leader decided, through his reports on the conduct of class members, who was ready for baptism and who would be suspended. He sometimes had his own criteria, not all of them religious, for these decisions. In addition he performed much of the instruction, teaching class members his own, often deviant interpretations of Christian concepts. Presbyterian missionaries criticized the system and the leaders severely.

> "They stand between the ministers and the people, limiting their free and mutual intercourse as much as they can--in many important cases preventing it altogether, and in general, permitting it only through themselves as a medium, whereby ministers and people know very little of each other, except through the misrepresentations of the leaders. . . . They seem to have the people completely under their control, and unless the latter please them in all things, they are understood to have the power of preventing them from being admitted to baptism, or of procuring their expulsion. By this means the people are their humble servants in many, and sometimes very sinful, ways."[8]

Class members thus retained more non-Christian religious elements and reinterpreted Christian patterns more than did persons in closer direct contact with the missionaries. Moreover, leaders and even whole classes sometimes seceded from the church to swell the ranks of Native Baptists, from whom the system was learned in the first place (Curtin, 1955: 37).

Settlement patterns and social class differences also promoted the development of the continuum. Most sectarian bodies had headquarters in the towns, and the Wesleyans concentrated their efforts there. Moreover, the planters could not effectively inhibit missionary activity among the townspeople, who thus had more opportunity to learn Christianity than did the estate slaves. Domestic slaves and freedmen, who constituted the upper classes of Negro society, were more prone to reject their African heritage and to accept European ways in full than were the lower-class field hands. Anxious to gain the approval and respect of the whites and having already accepted many European values, they were particularly motivated to learn Christian beliefs and rituals. In general, then, the townspeople and the upper classes became Christians sooner and more fully than the country field hands (Curtin, 1955: 43-6; Gardner, 1909: 357-8).

Other persons had little motivation to become Christians. For example the Obeah men and Myal men, who had vested interests in Africanoid beliefs, tended to reject the new system and their influence inhibited full acceptance of Christianity by many people. The members of Africanoid cults, who had been chosen by the gods and considered themselves select, also had little reason to join the sects. They already had channels for religious expression and felt no need to sing and shout in the churches. The great majority of Jamaicans, however, participated in the new religion. Whatever the extent to which different groups and categories of slaves accepted Christian values and beliefs, most of them considered themselves and therefore their ideas and practices Christian (Phillippo, 1843: 284-5). This acceptance of a value on being Christian had important implications for the subsequent development of religion in Jamaica. Many different sects and cults evolved, each being considered by its members the highest brand of Christianity regardless of the point at which it stood on the Afro-Christian continuum.

Relatively extensive data exist on three types of religious groups which were active in Jamaica during the years immediately preceding emancipation. The missionary congregations, or sectarians, occupied the Christian end of the continuum, while the Myal cults remained on the African extreme. Between these two stood the various independent Native Baptist bodies, whose beliefs and practices probably exemplified the syncretic religious tendencies of the great majority of slaves, even those who belonged to no formal groups. Many groups, of course, fit none of these types but occupied transitional positions between them. Some Baptist classes, for example, showed as much similarity to Native Baptists as to sectarians, and a number of deviant groups exhibited both Myalist and Native Baptist characteristics. It must also be noted that numerous threads of constancy ran through the continuum of Afro- Christian variation. Some widely accepted Christian concepts exerted considerable influence in even the most Africanoid cults, and some patterns deriving from Africa had tenacity enough to modify the Christianity of the most fervent disciples of the missionaries. Indeed, it appears that many Baptist class members participated also in Myalism, as will become evident in the next chapter.

Sectarians

On the Christian end of the continuum stood those sectarian congregations whose members replaced the African religious patterns with the puritanical religion of the missionaries. The different sects showed minor variations but emphasized quite similar beliefs, values, and ceremonial forms. Relatively few Jamaican Negroes realized the missionary ideal during this period, but it is likely that many, particularly among the upper classes in the towns, achieved an approximation of orthodoxy.

Sectarian religion differed greatly in character from that of the Africans. It rested on two basic promises; that an abstract, universally applicable dichotomy between good and evil exists, and that a stern, omnipotent God judges human actions in terms of this dichotomy. The missionaries believed that anyone, by regulating his behavior accordingly and depriving himself of the sinful pleasures of this world, can achieve eternal bliss in the next. The intense personal morality of their religion constituted the justification for their proselytization. Their teachings stressed the ultimate equality of men, but assumed an extreme intolerance of other religious beliefs and practices. The missionaries came to save the slaves from the eternal damnation which they believed to be the fate of all who were in their view non-Christian. They assumed that only through their religion could a person release himself from the state of depravity in which he was born and achieve eternal life in heaven.

To become a candidate for salvation a person had to first accept the premise that he was a terrible sinner and then had to repent wholeheartedly of his sins. Then, if he accepted Jesus Christ as his personal savior he would be absolved through divine forgiveness. Salvation involved an emotional religious experience termed "conversion," in which the candidate became filled with the spirit of God and was spiritually reborn. However, rebirth did not insure the convert's destiny, for there was always the danger of backsliding--of committing further sins and falling from his state of grace. To prevent this he had to concentrate on living a Christian life, adoring and obeying God, praying for forgiveness of any sins which he might have committed unknowingly, doing good works, and avoiding all temptation to sin again. Sectarian religion thus emphasized the personal responsibility of the individual for his own behavior, but it also stressed his dependence upon the supernatural. Only by subordinating himself to the will of God could the convert assure himself of a place in heaven.[9]

Sanctioning this moral emphasis was an elaborate mythology, contained along with definitions of sinful behavior and other fine points of doctrine in the Bible. The missionaries and their disciples were fundamentalists, believing the Bible to be literally the word of God, the ultimate and final Truth. They looked to it for the answers to all moral and religious questions and for guidance in living Christian lives.

The sectarians differed from the Africans not only in their emphases and ideas about morality, but also in their conceptualization of relationships between the material and the spiritual. To the missionaries these two worlds were distinct and separate rather than two aspects of a single system. They thought not in terms of interaction with spirits, but in terms of behavior in the material world affecting spiritual interaction in the afterlife. They looked for rewards not on earth but in heaven.

The sectarians were monotheistic in emphasis if not in fact. They believed in three deities conceptualized as three aspects of a single supreme being. They also recognize other spirits. Satan, a distinct spiritual entity who governed the forces of evil and struggled with God for control of the universe, constantly tried to lure people into sin so that he could claim their souls. A legion of angels served God in heaven and occasionally transmitted messages to human beings through visions. A host of lesser demons, "fallen angels," aided Satan in his efforts to overthrow the kingdom of God and in his seduction of human victims. Souls of the deceased led afterlives of bliss in heaven or of torment in hell. The missionaries also believed in ghosts, apparently; at any rate they did little to dispel Jamaican beliefs in them. Indeed, they reinforced such beliefs by attacking Obeah as the work of the devil (Clarke, 1869: 25-6; Phillippo, 1843: 148-9).

The character of sectarian ceremony followed from the basic premises of the system. Church services stressed the "worship" of God rather than His propitiation or use for practical purposes. Prayers to God were to strengthen devotion to Him and resistance to the forces of evil. Ceremonies involved extensive participation of members through hymn-singing, testimonies, and group recitation of the Bible. Religious experience was accepted, even encouraged, and the chapels often resounded with cries of "Hallelujah" and "Praise the Lord." The missionaries stressed the teaching of the scriptures to instill in their followers a greater understanding of Christianity (Phillippo, 1843: 306-46). Only converts with some scriptural knowledge were eligible for full membership in the church. Baptism, the major sectarian ceremony, validated conversion and constituted initiation into the ranks of the saved. Baptism had no spiritual effect in itself, but merely symbolized the convert's acceptance by God and the church (Clarke, 1869:

10; Waddell, 1863: 663).

The Christian emphasis on a single God and on other worldly rewards precludes cult formation and religious specialization like that found in Africa. Instead, the ambiguities of the Bible lead to disputes about the meaning of God's word. These disputes, often involving questions of morality, promote the development of dissenting sects. In Jamaica each sect extended the inherent Christian intolerance of other religions to competing Christian bodies as well. The Presbyterians accused the Baptists of sinful practices, and the latter were convinced that the former had gone astray. Thus, despite large numbers of potential converts and a shortage of missionaries, the sects competed. The missionaries constantly criticized each other's morals, motives, methods, and doctrines, and warned their converts about "false prophets" (Waddell, 1863: 661-3; Curtin, 1955: 164-5). Just as the African religious systems failed to achieve complete cooperative harmony, however, the sectarian religion was not completely competitive. The different sects had developed at least partly as a result of the spread of Christianity and its adaptation to new cultures. Religion adapted to culture in Jamaica also, and the sects tended to become associated with different sub-cultures. The Church of England remained the planter's sect, the Wesleyans appealed primarily to free colored people, and the Baptists attracted great numbers of field hands (Curtin, 1955: 70-2, 80; Gardner, 1909: 353-4).

Sectarian influences were not limited to members of missionary congregations, but diffused widely among the slaves and freedmen. Some Christian elements remained relatively unchanged in the process but others, particularly conceptual forms, underwent marked changes as they spread. As Curtin concludes, "the borrowings had to be made compatible with a number of tenacious ideas already present in Jamaica. Borrowings were therefore reinterpreted to fit the preconceptions" (Curtin, 1955: 208). These preconceptions were exemplified in the Myal cults of pre-emancipation Jamaica, which in turn were based upon a more extensive religious system.

Myalists

In order to understand pre-emancipation Myalism we must first bring up to date the attitudes and beliefs concerning ghosts and Obeah. During the earlier period the slaves tended to blame many of their troubles on Obeah men and duppies, and the mounting tensions under slavery were thus accompanied by an increase of ghost fear and apprehension concerning sorcery. This trend continued with the rise of the emancipation movement (Smith, 1953: 69-70). Although Obeah was devoted primarily to constructive purposes, it began early to acquire a bad name. The slaves all believed in it, and many took their problems to the Obeah man. This extensive utilization of magic often served to increase rather than to decrease tension, however, for one could never be sure that his neighbor was not using it destructively. The planters reinforced sorcery-fear by outlawing Obeah and thus driving it underground. The machinations of the Obeah man, now shrouded in secrecy, became even more suspect. The missionaries contributed the concept of abstract evil, and institutionalized fear of sorcery by calling Obeah the work of the devil. Their closest followers, taking this cue, identified Obeah with sorcery and used terms like "healing" and "reading" (divination) for obviously constructive magic. The problem remained, however, for they could never know that any "healer" was not also a sorcerer.[10]

Jamaicans joined the missionaries in their war against sorcery, but the movement was doomed. The concepts of evil and sorcery are relative to a person's own status and attitudes, and as long as they exist he can always find evil persons and sorcerers. The slaves were fighting their own fears, and the fight reinforced the beliefs that gave these fears direction. To the orthodox sectarian anyone using techniques and materials not approved by the Bible practiced sorcery. Even Obeah men, who considered themselves healers, might join the fight against their evil competitors.[11] The missionaries conceived the war as an anti-Obeah movement, and it is thus that they present it in their writings (Curtin, 1955: 30; Williams, 1934: 247-8). Knowing this, we can begin to understand Williams' error. He accepted the missionaries' definitions at face value and imputed them to the slaves. To him Obeah was inherently evil despite the evidence to the contrary.

Various religious groups constituted the armed forces in this war. All actively engaged the enemy and cooperated to defeat him by whatever means they could. However, methods of attack varied along the Afro-Christian continuum. The missionaries preached against the evils of Obeah, prohibited their followers from visiting Obeah men, and tried to win the sorcers away from their master the devil. The Myalists concentrated on counteracting the effects of sorcery, using mainly techniques derived from Obeah itself. An understanding of their role in the movement requires further analysis.

The war against sorcery included campaigns against ghosts, the supernatural beings utilized by sorcerers, as well as the specialists themselves. Again, the definitions were relative. The missionaries considered the duppies used in Obeah as minions of the devil, and this reinforced ghost-fear. However, not all duppies were bad. Sectarians believed that their shades went to heaven, and Myalists used the duppies of former cult members to combat sorcery. Most Jamaicans loved the shades of their relatives and took care to protect them from sorcerers. Thus the ghosts who joined the forces of evil were those of enemies or strangers, not those of loved ones or members of one's own religious group.[12] Other ghost beliefs, apparently deriving from Africa, complicated the situation. The slaves believed that every person has a "shadow," distinct from his soul, which is incapable of independent action during life but which upon death becomes a duppy. This duppy can cause trouble on its own, or can come under the control of an Obeah man. To prevent this it had to be caught and "laid" at the funeral and thus rendered impotent (Waddell, 1863: 138; Williams, 1934: 154-8). It was by way of this custom that each slave could defend the belief that his friends and relatives did not become malevolent and evil ghosts.

Jamaicans interpreted shadow catching not symbolically but literally. They chased and struggled with a spirit in which they believed firmly enough to perceive, and they went to great trouble to effect its capture. The elusive shadow, wanting freedom, would dodge his pursuers, slip from their grasp, and run away again and again. They had to chase him, entreat him, and grapple with him for hours before finally getting him confined in a tiny coffin and buried. Williams, who observed this ceremony several times, confesses that the slaves "scrambled and grasped at empty nothingness with much realism . . . that I found myself actually rubbing my eyes, almost convinced against myself that there must be an elusive something that escaped my vision."

(Williams, 1932: 152; cf. Gardner, 1909: 385-7). Despite the cifficulty of the task the shadow was apparently always caught and imprisoned.

This rite assured the survivors that duppies of friends and relatives would not trouble them but gave no defense against the depredations of other ghosts. Although designed in part to prevent sorcerers from procuring the spirits necessary to their trade, the custom ironically promoted the belief that they did. It was important that the shadow be caught, and thus desirable that a competent person do the job. Because of their experience in handling duppies Obeah men, particularly those who led Myal groups, often received the commission. They could, however, retain the shadow to use in healing. One entrusted this task only to a person he trusted completely, of course, but others might consider this same Obeah man a sorcerer and believe that he used the shadow for malicious purposes.

> "It was part of the art and power of a Myal man also to catch the shadow of a deceased person, and retain it for purposes of necromancy. . . . When he succeeded he secured it in a tiny coffin ready for the purpose, to be buried in the same grave, or deposited in the house and under the bed, of the practitioner for future use." (Waddell, 1863: 137).

Sorcerers were thus able to acquire the ghosts with which to perform their nefarious deeds. They committed other kinds of evil acts as well. They could not use the shadows of living persons to harm others, but they could steal those of their victims. A person deprived of his shadow would slowly waste away and finally die, leaving his duppy in the hands of the thief (Banbury, 1894: 10). Sorcerers also used a method which apparently worked automatically without the use of spirits. They made up magical bundles of various occult ingredients such as snake skins, cat claws, alligator teeth, and powerful herbs, and buried them in the yards of their victims. This buried Obeah, like shadow-loss, caused death by slow wasting away. The bundles were often placed in miniature coffins containing grave dirt, indicating a relationship between this method and that involving duppies (Bell, 1893: 3-5; Gardner, 1909: 187). Such beliefs and practices thus formed interrelated elements of an internally consistent religious system, to which the patterns of many religious groups were tied. The Myal cults in particular operated within this framework of belief and behavior, and developed as integral parts of the total configuration.

Myalism, we recall, originated in the use of Obeah in early slave revolts. During the eighteenth century it involved a ceremony in which the initiate was symbolically killed and then revived by Obeah. Even then Myalism had group structure, and by the 1830's it had become organized as a distinct cult. The missionaries had introduced the concept of religion as a social institution quite different from private Obeah, and religion had become the proper antidote to sorcery. Myalism, although it operated within the conceptual system of Obeah, achieved respectability because of its group organization and its prominence in the anti-sorcery movement. As we have seen, this movement was not restricted to sectarians. The growing fear of ghosts and sorcery provoked attempts to counteract these destructive forces and reduce anxieties. Since Myalists continued to stress such pragmatic aspects of religion as curing and laying ghosts, it was natural that they join the war against sorcerers. Myalism became even more similar to the witch finding cults of West Africa than previously.

Myal men nevertheless remained Obeah men. Not until long after emancipation did the two roles become separate and the Myal man as such become simply a religious leader. Even then the roles remained interdependent, and Williams' portrayal of the "Myal man by day" being an "Obeah man by night" does not reflect the situation accurately. The roles were never in opposition, and even Obeah men counteracted sorcery (Williams, 1934: 59; cf. Banbury, 1894: 10; Robinson and Wallhouse, 1893: 211; Phillippo, 1843: 248). Yet, Myal men were from the first distinguished from other Obeah men by their association with religious groups, much as cult leaders were differentiated from other fetish specialists in

Africa. The distinction became clearer in the nineteenth century when Myal men began to specialize in the curing of certain ailments, particularly those caused by sorcerers. Because of this specialization the missionaries perceived them as being opposed to "Obeah," or sorcery. The participation of cult members in their curing rites, making them more akin to religious ceremonies in the eyes of the missionaries, enhanced this perceptual bias. The slaves, too, were impressed by the Myalists' ability to counteract evil Obeah (Buchner, 1854: 138; Phillippo, 1843: 263).

During this period the Myal men became adept at locating buried Obeah. They held a ceremony in the victim's yard to learn, perhaps through dreams or possession, the location of the Obeah. Then, taking the proper ritual precautions, they were able to dig it up and neutralize its effects. Indeed, the Myalists may have monopolized this function.

> "The hidden 'poison' could be discovered and counteracted only by its proper Myal antidote, which the initiated alone knew. The power, which could detect and eradicate the subtle and malignant evil, was regarded as a real savior by the befooled people." (Waddell, 1863: 187; cf. Emerick, 1916: 39-40).

During this period the Myalist also acquired a reputation for curing shadow-loss, a disease which had reached almost epidemic proportions. To retrieve a shadow the Myal group met at night under a Ceiba, or silk-cotton tree, upon which the Obeah man was supposed to have nailed it and where wandering duppies were wont to gather (Banbury, 1894: 20; Waddell, 1863: 137-8; Robinson and Wallhouse, 1893: 211; Gardner, 1909: 459). They wore ritual uniforms, sang, danced, sacrificed chickens and eggs, and became possessed by spirits who aided them in releasing the shadow from its spell.

> "The victim was dressed all in white, with a white handkerchief about his head. Eggs and fowls were taken along with cooked food to the cotton-tree. The myal-men paraded up and down before the tree, with white cloths over their shoulders, singing and dancing; and all the people joined in the chorus. Alternately the cotton-tree was pelted with eggs, and the necks of fowls wrung off, and their bodies cast at it. This was done to propitiate the 'deaths,' or duppies that had the shadow enthralled at the tree, the song and dancing proceeded more vigorously as the shadow began to make signs of leaving the tree. A white basin, with water to receive it, was held up; after they had sung,

> yelled and danced to their hearts' content, they all of a sudden caught up the person, and ran home with him, affirming that the shadow was caught, covered up in the basin. Upon reaching home a cloth was wet in the water, and applied to the head of the patient and the shadow was said to be restored (Emerick, 1916: 40).

A third way in which the Myal men counteracted the effects of sorcery was almost the reverse of shadow-catching--they removed malignant duppies. Ghosts could, for reasons of their own or upon orders from sorcerers, enter the bodies of living persons to cause sickness and death. Techniques used to dislodge them varied considerably. Some Myalists held rites similar to those of shadow-catching, while others extracted snakes, pieces of glass, and other Obeah materials from their patients' bodies in a ceremony resembling the old Myal dance (Waddell, 1863: 135-7, 189-91; De Lisser, 1913: 114-18; Phillippo, 1843: 248-9). The reputations gained thus by the Myal men soon convinced the missionaries, and later Williams, that Myalism "must not be confounded with _Obea_, to which indeed it was wholly opposed. It affected to cure the sicknesses, and remove other evils, which Obea produced." (Waddell, 1863: 37; cf. Buchner, 1854: 139).

As in Africa, the Myalists depended upon the cooperation of spirits for their results. In return for sacrifices and other considerations, the spirits performed the various tasks requested of them by the Myal men. They selected new cult members by possessing their bodies, and possessed them at meetings thereafter, sometimes to communicate messages but on other occasions merely to gratify esthetic impulses by dancing. All evidence indicates that most of these spirits were ghosts. One observer says of Myalism that "its mysteries and operations consist in the communications with spirits or 'deaths.'" (Banbury, 1894: 10). Another states that on one estate the Myalists were "doing all they can to 'get the spirit,' going to the grave, and praying to the dead for that purpose." (Waddell, 1863: 194). We may expect, judging from present-day cult beliefs, that many of these duppies were those of deceased cult members. This would indicate a shift of ancestral beliefs from a kinship to an associational framework. The Myalists may also have believed in and been possessed by water spirits, and later with angels diffusing from sectarian religion (Banbury, 1894: 20; Waddell, 1863: 37; Phillippo, 1843: 263; Gardner, 1909: 391-2).

Little is known of Myal cult structure. Each group appears to have been independent, under the leadership of a single Myal man or woman who exercised despotic authority over the members. In addition to full members who "had the spirit," there were probably helpers to care for possessed persons. Meetings began with Africanoid chants and possibly Christian hymns. The dances that followed involved the "peculiar hip motion" that is still seen in the dances of such revivalistic cults as Pocomania (Williams, 1934: 99, 196; Waddell, 1864: 189-94). This behavior culminated in trance, or spirit possession, which was marked by even more violent dancing, rapid whirling in a small circle, and sometimes glossolalia, interpreted as messages from the spirits. Apparently, not all Myal ceremonies had specific, practical purposes, but all of them made profound impressions upon the spectators (Gardner, 1909: 459-60; Waddell, 1863: 191-3).

Myalist ideas influenced the great majority of Jamaican slaves even at the height of missionary activity. The closest followers of the missionaries felt their impact, even as Christian ideas affected adherents of Myalism. Many Jamaicans, however, accepted neither of these systems fully, but combined elements from both into a new religious complex. The two traditions met most noticeably in Native Baptism, which probably exemplified the beliefs and concepts of more mid-nineteenth century Jamaicans than either of the two extremes.

Native Baptists

Occupying a middle range on the Afro-Christian continuum, the various independent Native Baptist groups competed with both sectarians and Myalists. They included groups descended from the early congregations of Lisle and his colleagues as well as Baptist classes which had broken away from the sectarian bodies. Despite their diverse origins and mutual independence, these groups evolved similar religious systems. Inter-group diffusion and adaptation of similar antecedents to comparable situations probably aided this development. The Native Baptists exercised great influence among the slaves, having operated without serious competition from the missionaries for almost forty years and often having as leaders persons with authoritative positions on the estates. Another factor in their popularity lay in their offering "a reinterpretation of Christianity closer to the religious beliefs of the community" than that of the missionaries, and at the same time gaining the prestige accorded to anything labeled "Christian" (Curtin, 1955: 34, 168; cf. Cox, 1842, I: 17). On the one hand they represented an acceptance of Christian ideas, and on the other a reaction to the foreign attitudes of the missionaries.

The leader, called "Daddy" or "Mammy," exercised strict control over the religious lives of his followers and much of their secular behavior as well. He was the final authority on questions of doctrine and ethics, ceremonial forms, admission of new members and expulsion of old ones, and on most other decisions affecting the group. He was limited only by his beliefs, and thus by the spirits that he and his followers served. He was perhaps a tyrant, but no more so than the missionaries who berated him on this account. Like the missionaries he often had assistants and sometimes expanded his congregation through the class-and-leader system (Gardner, 1909: 357-8; Phillippo, 1843: 148-9).

The Native Baptists considered themselves Christians, but their religion resembled Myalism as much as sectarianism. They believed in Christian spirits and phrased their ideas in sectarian terms, but they stressed personal interaction with spirits more than sin and salvation. Most of them could not read to consult the Bible for Truth, and so chose an alternative method for attaining spiritual knowledge. They learned directly from the spirits. Since only the person who knew the spiritual truths could become a true Christian, it followed that making contact with spirits who imparted this knowledge was requisite for full membership in the group.

> "The grand doctrine of these people was the Spirit's teaching. . . . The written word was a dead letter. If they could not read the Bible they could do without it, which was as good. The Spirit was sought in dreams and visions of the night, which thus became the source of their spiritual life. Without them inquirers could not be born again either by water or the Spirit. The leaders expounded

> these dreams to their kneeling followers in weekly class meetings; which, when judged to be of a right kind, were called 'the work,' that is, of the Spirit, and supplied the place of knowledge, faith, and repentance."[13]

Gibb, a famous early leader in St. Mary parish, accused inquirers who could not dream of neglecting their prayers, indicating a belief that the spirit would appear to those who led good Christian lives. Members could hasten this appearance by fasting or going on a vision-quest. Such quests sometimes lasted for weeks, and were interpreted as imitations of Christ's journey in the wilderness (Robb, 1861: 34-5; Phillippo, 1843: 263). Some cult leaders admitted candidates who dreamed properly to baptism, but others required spirit possession. In either case a person once converted could expect frequent additional visits from the spirit and thus attain further spiritual knowledge (Gardner, 1909: 357). Our sources do not identify "the spirit." Judging from contemporary Jamaican thought, this was probably a general term which could refer specifically to any spirit, often denoting the Holy Ghost. Christian angels apparently appeared most frequently in dreams. Some groups went into the woods at Christmas expecting to receive visitations from the angels who had announced the birth of Christ and were thought to make annual appearances (Phillippo, 1843: 271). The Native Baptists believed also in

Satan and his host of fallen angels, and taking their cue from the missionaries denounced Obeah men for being in league with these evil forces (Clarke, 1869: 25-6). Some leaders also dealt with ghosts.

> "These infatuated men professed a firm belief in purgatory, and . . . pretended an acquaintance with the destinies of the deceased. Thus, on inquiries being made of their teachers by surviving relatives or friends, the uniform reply was that 'they would go and dream about it, and give the required information on the morrow.'" (Phillippo, 1843: 271).

Another important spirit was John the Baptist, whose status in Native Baptist ideology was elevated by the knowledge that he had baptized Christ and by the importance attached to the rite of baptism. In some cases he overshadowed Christ entirely and was seen as the founder of Christianity. Some followers of Moses Baker, for example, told Waddell: "He go to Church, massa; me go John Baptis church. We pray, massa; me pray to John Baptis." (Waddell, 1863: 35-6; cf. Robb, 1861: 36).

Many Native Baptists considered baptism more than a simple initiation. It tended to become a magical rite which was supposed to wash away the sins of the candidate. As Curtin says, "it was no longer a symbol, but the extension of Grace itself" (Curtin, 1955: 34; cf. Clarke, 1869:

10). Like other ceremonies, baptisms were occasions for interaction with the spirits. Possession, brought on by singing and dancing, constituted the high point of every major rite. It is interesting to note that the Native Baptists called the trance experience "convince," a term which connoted divine revelation and one which today refers to a ghost cult (Gardner, 1909: 357; Clarke, 1869: 15; Hogg, 1960). These trances resembled those of the Myalists.

> "Their usual attitude in prayer partook of all the austerities of penance. They either stood with their arms extended, and their whole bodies as though transfixed against the wall, or prostrated themselves upon the earth; and in this attitude they remained many hours at a time, and sometimes through the entire night, manifesting the most violent muscular contortions, and uttering the most discordant sounds expressive of internal anguish and agonizing supplication" (Phillippo, 1843: 271).

Judging from the reactions of present-day cultists, however, spirit possession was welcomed and enjoyed, however painful it seems to the spectator.

Other ceremonial elements derived from sectarian practices. Native Baptist leaders stressed frequent fasting as a means of purification, and members washed one another's feet on ritual occasions. We read nothing of communion among them, but they sometimes held small feasts involving white table paraphernalia which symbolized purity (Clarke, 1869: 15, 26; Phillippo, 1843: 273). They held meetings at night, when there was less chance of being caught and punished by the planters, and this led to the use of such items as fire and candles, which later became highly elaborated. In spite of their lack of stress on the Bible, many Native Baptist practices had biblical origins, justifications, and interpretations. For example, some leaders claimed the spiritual "gifts" of divination, healing, prophecy, and interpreting "unknown tongues." They practiced a combination of faith healing and magical curing, annointing the patient's head with oil to the accompaniment of prayer and song by members of the group (Phillippo, 1843: 271; Holy Bible, 1 Corinthians, 12).

The Native Baptist groups described above stood near the center of the Afro-Christian continuum, serving the slaves who could join neither Christian churches nor Africanoid cults or who had accepted sectarian ideas while retaining the old beliefs as well. Native Baptism varied widely, however, from near-sectarian to near-Myalist, and in addition other religious groups stood at various points in the transitional zones.

Transitional Types

Between the modal Native Baptists and the orthodox sectarians appeared those Baptist classes which had relatively little contact with the missionaries. They deviated in the same direction as the Native Baptists, many of whom were simply classes which had severed ties with the sectarian bodies (Cox, 1842, I: 16-17; Phillippo, 1843: 294). They reinterpreted Christianity more subtly than did the Native Baptists, accepting more fully the ideas of sin and salvation and putting greater emphasis on the afterlife. The leaders stressed the conversion experience, but were not explicit in phrasing it as spirit possession. Class members did not measure up to missionary ideals in their internalization of Christian doctrine and values, however. They accepted the Bible as the final authority on religious matters but emphasized different passages and interpreted them differently than did the missionaries. Some leaders required dreams, conceived as visitations from angels, as evidence of conversion.

The services which they held in the absence of the missionaries stressed singing, dancing, and religious experience. Baptism, the initiation rite which insured the future of the candidate's soul, was the high point of ceremony. Many thought, like Native Baptists, that it washed away sins. With the growth of the value on being Christian, baptism offered prestige as the final criterion of membership in the church.

To insure control over their classes the Baptist missionaries had issued tickets to the members. Each ticket specified its holder's status as member, candidate, or inquirer and admitted him to services and communion. The missionary himself issued tickets and renewed them quarterly upon payment of subscriptions. This restricted the power of leaders, aided discipline over members, and insured payment of contributions, but it had negative results as well. The slaves imputed magical significance to the tickets, perceiving them as "passports to heaven" as well as symbols of church membership. Tickets became fetishes which slaves bought from missionaries just as they bought amulets from Obeah men, to use as protective devices (Waddell, 1863: 662-3; Curtin, 1955: 37).

This use of tickets gives an indication of the extent to which Christian beliefs and practices supplemented the Africanoid forms rather than replacing them. The fact that Obeah men joined the churches and used such sectarian items as tickets for magic supports this view. The slaves apparently viewed Christianity as a cult rather than a complete religion. It had great prestige and power, but this did not negate the value of such other cults as Myalism. Many slaves accepted the new beliefs and practices wholeheartedly and defended them rigorously, but most incorporated them into their larger religious framework.

Other cults sprang up near the African end of the continuum. Their ideologies and rituals varied considerably with the ideas of their leaders, but most were generally similar to Native Baptist and Myalist groups. Both Christian and non-Christian spirits possessed their members and sometimes dwelled in idols or fetishes. Obeah men led many such groups. Cynric Williams gives a delightful but typically biased account of one led by a man named "Schweppes or Swipes," who had his own kind of fight with Obeah.

> "It seems he has often an attendance of negroes to hear him preach, to whom he has the assurance to communicate the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; but as he can get no wine, he distributes rum and sometimes porter, and roasted plantains and cocos for bread. The figure on the crucifix is meant for the worshipful Mr. W_______[Wilberforce, a famous abolitionist] and is made out of an old black coat, with a calabash tied to the cross for his head, on which a nose and eyes are scratched with charcoal. . . . He and his companions sit round the effigy of Saint Wilforce, as they call it, . . . until the evening closes in, when they are greeted with the company of their wives or sweethearts, and a ceremony similar to the American love-feasts is performed in the dark, or by the blinker light of the dying embers.
>
> "This fanatical rascal has really great power over the minds of the negroes, which is, however, moderated by the efforts of an Obeah

> man, his declared rival, or he would urge them into the most abominable excesses. He converts their credulity to his own prophet, persuades the women out of their ear-rings and necklaces, and the men out of their fowls and pigs. He has even set them to rob one another, assuring them that whatever they bring to him is a sacrifice to God. His rapacity almost equals that of the priesthood of old, but his Obeah rival still retains an influence over even his followers--an influence under which they were born--and, by his spells, his charms, and his fetishes, guards the property of his less enterprising and more peaceful neighbors" (Williams, 1827: 39-41).

This was clearly a local group which had evolved its own Afro-Christian synthesis of religious patterns. It indicates the extent to which the various cults differed, but also shows elements common to many of them. Even collectively such groups as this never became numerically strong, but they were recognized as valid and useful by many Jamaicans and may have had considerable influence. They represented different attempts to build a new religion from diverse antecedents and adapt it to the solution of new problems arising from a unique socio-cultural environment.

Summary and Transition

The missionaries instituted radical changes in Jamaican religion, but not all of them did they expect or desire. Their religion gained much of its popularity from their role in the emancipation movement rather than from an appreciation of the religion itself on the part of the slaves. It reflected not an acceptance of Christian ideology, but the growth of a strong value on being Christian--on joining a high-prestige organization that battled the masters and promised freedom. Different groups of Jamaicans responded differently to this new religion. In general, the slaves in closest contact with the missionaries tended to accept it relatively quickly and fully. So also did the townspeople and the house slaves, whose sub-cultures rested on a firm European base and who tended to reject Africanoid customs. The Presbyterians and the Moravians promoted more complete acculturation than did the Baptists and Wesleyans, but among fewer followers. Wide variations in religion resulted, many of which fell along an Afro-Christian continuum. The religious groups favored by the greatest numbers of Jamaicans showed extensive syncretion rather than identification with either the African or the Christian system.

The slaves tended to retain the old religious principles and interpret new ideas and practices in terms of them. As Curtin says, "ideas rarely move without being transformed in the process; like the chameleon, they change to fit their background" (Curtin, 1955:209). New ideas also affect the background, however, and their introduction in Jamaica promoted the reinterpretation of old beliefs and behaviors as well. Syncretized patterns received greatest emphasis in the synthesis. New items bearing strong resemblances to existing ones, like faith healing, religious experience, and singing were integrated into the system with little conflict and found reinforcement from both sectarians and Africans. In contrast, Christian patterns foreign to the African world view, such as the concepts of sin and salvation, tended to be de-emphasized.

The cooperative Africanoid cult system predominated in the Jamaican synthesis. The slaves retained polytheistic beliefs and the cults continued to complement each other. Competitive Christian sectarianism arose as well, however, and each emergent group claimed to practice the best type of religion. A blending of the concepts of sin and sorcery furthered this trend by bringing out the competitive aspects of African religion. Religion changed steadily in the direction of Christianity, but African principles remained significant and continued to govern much Jamaican thinking. Emancipation and the subsequent reorganization of society promoted still new religious developments, with which the next chapter deals.

Chapter 4

POST-EMANCIPATION RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENTS

Introductory Statement

The emancipation of the slaves in 1834 presaged the end of the great missionary movement. Christian proselytizers had introduced their most important innovations by this time, and it remained for Jamaicans to diffuse them throughout the society, synthesize them more thoroughly with indigenous religious patterns, and fit them into the cultural system. New elements from Christian and other sources continued to enter Jamaica in later years, but the most significant religious changes occurred within the culture itself. Adaptation of existing traits to changing sociocultural conditions again became the salient process of religious modification. Jamaican culture and society altered radically after emancipation. Events leading up to abolition, occurrences during the transitional apprenticeship period, and activities following this period necessitated profound revisions in the policies of missionaries, planters, and government administrators. Widespread changes in settlement patterns, economic orientations, and social organization resulted, setting the stage for new developments in religion among different sections of the population. Subsequent secular innovations promoted additional religious alterations. Yet, the general character of Jamaican religion had been set during the pre-emancipation period, and later changes were largely quantitative and specific rather than basic. A general shift toward sectarianism was perhaps the most noticeable trend. The more orthodox religious groups steadily gained strength and popularity at the expense of others, and the basic principles of Christianity exerted increasing influence among all social groups. The cults themselves did not evolve unilineally, but converged and then diverged again, only to combine once more and allow still new cults to develop. In order to understand this complex evolution, we must first examine briefly the socio-cultural changes that influenced it.

Emancipation, Apprenticeship, and Resettlement

Several factors influenced the early emancipation. Spurred on by nonconformist churches and humanitarian leaders, the abolition movement had been gathering momentum for decades. New sources of sugar had opened up, and the English had become less dependent on West Indian slave labor for this commodity. The price of sugar dropped, and many Jamaican estates which were operating on narrow profit margins went bankrupt, further reducing the weight of arguments in defence of slavery. As West Indian sugar production and the vested interests in it declined, English legislators yielded more to humanitarian arguments until, in 1833, Parliament made the final decision to free the slaves (Olivier, 1933: 129-37; Curtin, 1955: 61-98; Gardner, 1909: 211-317; Sewell, 1861: 172-3, 231-41; Mintz, 1959: 275-6).

The planters had convinced Parliament that simple emancipation would mean the collapse of the plantation system and the end of Jamaican sugar production. They maintained that the Negroes would refuse to work if not coerced, and would move from the estates onto free land. This would mean complete ruin to the planters, who had no access to other sources of labor. Parliament therefore adopted the apprenticeship plan, designed to condition the slaves to wage work. The slaves received legal freedom on August 1, 1834, but remained bound to their former masters as paid apprentices for seven years. Then, presumably ready to remain on the estates as laborers, they would be released (Curtin, 1955: 90-2; Olivier, 1936: 100-6). The plan, as Hall notes, "attempted an impossible compromise between slavery and freedom" and failed miserably (Hall, 1953: 164). Many planters, convinced that their estates were doomed, used it merely to gain seven years' grace. Instead of giving the apprentices satisfactions, they worked them as much as possible and imposed upon them various petty annoyances which set them firmly against wage labor. The freedmen also abused the system, and the government had to abandon it prematurely. On August 11, 1838 the apprentices were granted unconditional freedom (Hall, 1953: Gardner, 1909: 394-403; Curtin, 1955, 73-95; Olivier, 1936: 67-71, 83-4).

The anticipated problem of keeping the ex-slaves on the estates then became a real one. Attempts to freeze available land failed because the owners of failing estates had to sell in order to avoid complete ruin. A plan to import European peasants to fill the vacant land also failed. The planters then tried to hold the freedmen through debt-peonage, class legislation, contract labor, and rent-and-wage manipulation. Their schemes occasionally succeeded, but in most cases simply alienated the freedmen further and encouraged them to flee to the hills.[1]

The ex-slaves were well prepared for the transition to peasantry. For generations they had grown their own foodstuffs on the provision grounds, and thus had ample experience in small farming. They had grown other crops as well, and had developed an efficient internal marketing system for distributing their surplus. Many had saved money from selling produce, and they could buy small plots of good land from bankrupt estates at very low prices (Mintz and Hall, 1960; Olivier, 1936: 71-4, 137-8, 158-63; Sires, 1940: 490-3; Cumper, 1954: 48-54). Even those without funds could squat on unused or Crown lands. They were not restricted to peasant farming, but could supplement their incomes by working on the estates in their spare time. Thousands of freedmen took advantage of these opportunities.

At first, the missionaries joined the planters in trying to keep the ex-slaves on the estates, for they did not want to lose their hard-earned converts. They urged submissiveness to the planters, campaigned for higher wages and better working conditions, and tried to prevent abuses. They fought a losing battle, however, and their converts began to lose confidence in them. In despair, they finally decided to aid the freedmen in obtaining land, and in so doing they expanded the outflow to a mass exodus (Waddell, 1863: 152; Curtin, 1955: 162-3; Underhill, 1881: 132-8). As Curtin observes:

> "In spite of unused land and the Negro desire to grow provisions rather than sugar, the settlement movement would not have grown so rapidly merely on the individual initiative of the former slaves. Organization was necessary for the joint purchase and division of a 'property' into small plots. . . . It was the missionary movement that provided the necessary organization and experience in European business methods for the rapid development of land settlement" (Curtin, 1955: 114).

The Baptists led the venture, buying the land for their first free village, Sligoville, in the mountains above Spanish Town. Other sects followed, and by 1844 missionaries had established more than a hundred free villages in various parts of the island (Olivier, 1936: 110-13; Paget, 1950; Cumper, 1954: 133-4; Underhill, 1862: 240-2; 1881: 189-91).

Not all the freedmen were able to establish freeholds, however. The first great wave of settlers acquired most of the available good land, and the planters soon developed methods of keeping their workers tied to the estates. On the large coastal plains, especially, sugar estates continued to thrive and the freedmen did not learn about opportunities to obtain peasant holdings in the uplands until it was too late (Olivier, 1936: 197; cf. Sewell, 1861: 208-9). Other ex-slaves sought their fortunes in the towns and cities. Each of these environments--missionary villages, independent peasant communities, estates, and towns--formed a different socio-cultural context for religion and played a distinct role in its development.

Social and Religious Variations

The missionaries followed a characteristic method in founding their villages. They bought large tracts of land from owners of ruinate estates and subdivided them into lots which they sold on long-term payment plans to qualified freedmen. The village itself they laid out on a special reserved plot, orienting it around the mission and other central buildings. Their settlements were of two kinds. Some missionaries, wanting their followers to continue working for the planters, located near estates. Their lots were often too small to support families and constituted little more than residence units with attached provision grounds. Missionaries who desired greater freedom and self-sufficiency for their charges built villages farther back in the hills. These contained larger lots and formed true peasant communities (Cumper, 1954: 134-6; Mintz, 1958: 58-60). Aside from this difference, the church villages all had similar social structures.

The missionaries kept their primary goal of promoting orthodox Christianity firmly in mind. Just as the mission house dominated the physical village, the church authority dominated the social community. All of the residents were church members--indeed, the most pious of the many who had applied. The minister, backed by the church and assisted by his elders or deacons, exercised immense authority over the spiritual and secular lives of the settlers. He regulated all capital expenditures, settled all major disputes, and controlled marriage and family arrangements. He also handled the land titles and mediated between villagers and the government (Mintz, 1958: 61-4; Cumper, 1954: 135-7; Olivier, 1936: 115).

The minister banned all activities that he thought might threaten the purity of his followers, for example dancing, holiday festivals, and civil marriages. These rules were generally obeyed, for breaking them meant ostracism, suspension from the church, and often expulsion from the village. In other kinds of settlements such interdictions succeeded only in incurring hostility and reducing church membership, for they covered almost all native amusements and recreational outlets.[2] Even the pious church villagers seem to have reacted against this rigid morality, for during the 1840's missionaries were complaining about their decreased piety, and by 1860 many of the communities had thrown off church domination. Nevertheless, most of their inhabitants remained sectarian in outlook (Underhill, 1862: 308-23; Olivier, 1936: 125-7; Mintz, 1958: 14-17).

Rural communities formed independently by freedmen bore little resemblance to the planned, organized church villages. Like the latter they were of two general kinds; those near estates upon which their inhabitants worked to supplement their incomes, and more isolated settlements whose residents engaged in full-time peasant agriculture (Paget, 1950: 12-19). The peasants did not, as the planters had predicted, practice simple subsistence farming, but also grew crops for sale in the towns and even for export (Sewell, 1861: 249-52; Cumper, 1954: 138-9; Mintz and Hall, 1960: esp. 18-19; Mintz, 1958: 49-55; Hall, 1959: 164-5). They had less orthodox religious foundations than the church villagers. Native Baptist influence usually predominated, but Myalism may have reigned in some areas. Obeah flourished everywhere. The lack of public facilities in these settlements made religion quite important for insuring social control, reducing health anxieties, providing recreation, and solving many other problems. Native religious leaders did most of the curing, acted as legal and economic advisors, held positions of authority, and furnished what little community organization there was

(Underhill, 1862: 280-3; Curtin, 1955: 168; Olivier, 1936: 125-7). Missionaries traveled to most areas, however, and continuing sectarian influences penetrated even remote settlements, pushing the native religions toward orthodoxy.

Both the church villagers and the independent settlers adjusted quite rapidly to free life, and during the first years after emancipation they seemed satisfied and sometimes even prosperous (Olivier, 1936: 120-5; Hall, 1959: 23-6, 157-69; Sewell, 1861: 246-54). Soon, however, their problems began to mount. Wages and prices declined and many estates went bankrupt, reducing incomes and putting many people out of work. The freeholds were in general too small to support ~~the~~ growing population adequately, and government restrictions increased. A series of droughts and epidemics of smallpox and cholera intensified the difficulties, as did the lack of medical, educational, and welfare agencies. Many people became discouraged and depressed (Olivier, 1936: 117-18, 176-8, 196-9; Sewell, 1861: 176-8; Hall, 1959: 169-81). Even so, the settlers fared better than most other freedmen.

The laborers who remained on the estates were miserable. They held strong bargaining positions at first and could command high wages, for the exodus of settlers had created a shortage of labor (Hall, 1959: 19, 158-9). This situation soon changed, however. Within a few years the available peasant lands had been occupied, and failing estates had thrown more workers on the market. The laborers had nowhere else to go. Many were bound to the plantations by contract, debt, or the consequences of other schemes of the planters. Others had little security, for the planters could fire them without notice and force them off the estates during slack seasons. They received inadequate and irregular wages and often paid exhorbitant rents for miserable hovels and inferior provision grounds. They had few medical, educational, or welfare services. Furthermore, they could not establish stable social ties or community organizations, for the estate populations were fluid and shifting. Some laborers came from rural villages and towns to work during busy seasons, and others moved from estate to estate seeking better wages and working conditions.[3]

The freedmen who drifted to the cities fared no better. Some found employment as domestics or laborers, and craftsmen were able to exploit their skills, but others had difficulty gaining subsistence. The urban population expanded more rapidly than did job opportunities and living facilities, and the results were widespread poverty, congestion, disease, crime, and the anxieties that accompany such conditions (Olivier, 1936: 34-5, 135-7; Sewell, 1861: 173-6, 206-12; Hall, 1959: 222-35). Moreover, the colored middle classes, who had firmly entrenched themselves in the urban social and economic system, resented and dominated the newly freed blacks, creating additional difficulties for them

(Underhill, 1862: 192; Curtin, 1955: 172-7). Even the churches failed the newcomers. The Anglican and Roman Catholic bodies catered mainly to whites and upper-class colored people, as did many Presbyterian kirks, while the Wesleyan Methodists favored the middle classes. Baptists and other sympathetic sects helped some, but they could not expand rapidly enough to meet the growing demands for religious leadership and aid (Underhill, 1862: 223-7; Curtin, 1955: 165-6).

Both in the cities and on the estates, then, satisfactions were few and frustrations many. The missionaries did their best to improve conditions. They intervened in wage disputes, advised the freedmen in their relations with employers, lobbied for Negro rights, and took the lead in developing medical and educational facilities (Sewell, 1961: 255-6; Curtin, 1955: 162-4). In so doing, they also helped themselves. Just as their role in terminating slavery had accelerated the growth of their churches, each of their subsequent material gains brought them new converts. They accompanied their efforts with prayer and thanked God for every success, teaching their followers that everything depends upon His will. The freedmen thus became increasingly convinced of the power of Christianity and joined the churches by the thousands. Some sects doubled or tripled their memberships during this period, and all grew rapidly (Curtin, 1955: 162, 168; Phillippo, 1843: 253; Underhill, 1881:

132-8).

However, the problems involved in the transition from slave to free society were too many and too varied to be solved even by the missionaries in so short a time. The planters increased their abuses on the estates, and conditions in the cities grew worse. The co-existence of two distinct world views among the freedmen created other difficulties. Orthodox sectarianism could not solve Jamaican problems because most Jamaicans were not yet fully committed to orthodox sectarianism. They had not sufficiently internalized Christian premises and values. Thousands tended to blame Obeah rather than sin for their troubles and to attack their problems by establishing relationships with spirits rather than by Christian resignation or hope for a better after-life. Furthermore, the missionaries refused to adapt their ideological and moral system to Jamaican conditions. Making no concessions, they were unable to apply this system to many of the most pressing Jamaican problems. In addition they aroused the resentment of freedmen by condemning as sinful most of their recreational activities and their non-Christian mating practices. Tensions thus continued to increase on the estates and in the cities, and after a few years the freedmen again began to turn to native leaders. Church membership declined, and after 1845 all sectarian groups had lost their post-emancipation gains. In some membership was halved (Cumper, 1954: 139; Underhill, 1862: 312: Curtin, 1955: 169-70).

Native Baptists and Myalists, too, increased their activities in response to the dissatisfactions and frustrations in estate and urban communities. The leaders of these cults had few funds and almost no bargaining power with the planters or the government, and thus could not effect material gains. However, they had other advantages. Unaffected by the formal training requirements that restricted missionary numbers, they could expand rapidly to meet growing demands for their services. They also benefited from mounting reactions to sectarian moral restrictions and from decreasing confidence in the missionaries' ability to gain further help for the freedmen. Their beliefs and values adapted more readily than the rigid sectarian codes to the conditions and problems peculiar to estate and urban environments. Their more violent ceremonies served to release tensions better than did the Christian resignation advocated by the missionaries and thus promoted greater immediate satisfactions. Finally, the freedmen considered the medical and advisory aid offered by the cult leaders at least as valuable as that of the ministers. Native Baptist and Myalist groups thus grew rapidly and soon surpassed the churches in strength. Furthermore, native religious beliefs and values permeated even sectarian groups and had more influence over the freedmen generally than mere membership indicates.[4]

The freedmen could no more solve their problems through

Native Baptism or Myalism than through Christian orthodoxy, and in both estate and urban settlements frustrations continued to plague them. Yet, they never lost faith in the supernatural, and having no other recourse they persisted in seeking help through religion. For solutions to some kinds of problems many turned to Obeah men, who thus, like other religious specialists, increased their activities. The expansion of Obeah was furthered by the difficulty of enforcing laws against it in the swollen towns and disorganized estate communities. As the practice of Obeah proliferated so did fear of ghosts and sorcery. Noticing the busy Obeah men, the distressed freedmen found it convenient to blame their misfortunes on evil magicians and duppies. Soliciting the services of "good" magicians to counteract these adverse forces further boosted the Obeah rate. The spiral of cause and effect also led to greater participation in the cults, for Native Baptist and Myalist leaders fought the evil powers too. Religious activity accelerated until in the 1840's it attained the scope and intensity of a major movement, which involved both native and orthodox religions and epitomized the results of a half-century of religious acculturation. The movement proceeded in two major phases, which although interrelated have been treated in the literature as separate events. As we might expect, both phases centered on the estates and in the cities, but they spread to rural areas as well. They represented alternative approaches to the problem of regaining control over the disrupted social environment.

The Climax of Jamaican Religion

The first phase of the great Jamaican religious movement had its inception in the proliferation of Obeah and the heightened fear of sorcery that accompanied it. It constituted an organized renewal of the battle against black magic and a resurgence of Myalism, which was no longer affected by laws prohibiting slave gatherings and unlicensed religious ceremonies, as the leading force in this campaign. The Great Myal procession, as it was called, began late in 1841 on a St. James estate and spread rapidly through the northwestern part of the island during 1842 (Waddell, 1863: 187-8; Curtin, 1955: 170; Phillippo, 1843: 263). It was apparently precipitated by Obeah practices among some newly-arrived Yoruba immigrants--from contraband slave ships captured by the British--perhaps because their magical techniques seemed strange and suspicious to the freedmen (Bruce, 1946: 114). A true Myal group initiated the procession, but once started it was picked up and carried on by members of Christian churches, particularly Baptist classes (Banbury, 1894: 20-1). In a sense, then, the procession represented a subtle reaction against strict sectarian orthodoxy and missionary dominance, and it illustrates the extent to which the class members had retained their old beliefs under the guidance of class leaders. The more thoroughly acculturated Presbyterians and Moravians participated in it but little.[5]

Although the procession acquired a Christian banner and various sectarian characteristics under the class members, it was led by Myal men and retained many of the old Myal patterns. Phillippo gives us the orthodox Baptist interpretation of the movement:

> "The Myal-men, having most of them been employed in attendance on the sick in the hospitals of estates, and thereby acquired some knowledge of medicine, have, since the abolition of slavery, set up as medical men; and, in order to increase their influence, and, consequently their *gains*, have called to their aid the mysteries of this abominable superstition; in many cases accomplishing their purposes by violence as well as by terror. The more effectually to delude the multitude, the priests of this deadly art, now that religion has become general, have incorporated with it a religious phraseology, together with some of the religious observances of the most popular denominations, and thus have in some instances succeeded in imposing on the credulity and fears of many of whom better things had been expected" (Phillippo, 1843: 187-91).

The participants added more than Christian phraseology and ritual, however. They considered the Myal procession a Christian movement of the highest order, and with true sectarian zeal believed that God had commissioned them to cleanse the world of sorcery. Nevertheless, many of their methods were characteristically African. They were concerned with discovering sorcerers, locating and destroying buried Obeah, and retrieving the lost or stolen shadows of living persons. These methods, they believed, would cure most physical and social ills. The Myalists used Christian angels and the Spirit of God to achieve these ends, but they also worked with ghosts which they had ritually released from their graves. Through visions and glossolalia these spirits transmitted revelations from God, and by possessing the members enabled them to effect their cures (Waddell, 1863: 188-94; Buchner, 1854: 140-2). The performances opened and closed with Christian hymns and prayers, but there the resemblance to church meetings ended. Participants sang and danced, and fell into violent trances which involved rapid spinning, tree climbing, self-flagellation, and other strange antics. Blood sacrifices, particularly of fowls, occurred at most ceremonies (Gardner, 1909: 459-60; Banbury, 1894: 20-2). When Obeah men believed to be sorcerers were caught, they received severe physical punishment. Yet, many Myalists imposed sectarian moral rules on members, prohibiting such sins as smoking and drinking and excluding persons with bad reputations from their groups.[6]

The new Myalism thus stood nearer the middle than the African end of the Afro-Christian continuum. Many of its most salient features received reinforcement from both the Christian and the African systems, and can be identified with neither. The movement is reminiscent of the West African witch-finding cults, but in its emphasis on sin seems quite sectarian. It may be noted that Williams' thesis concerning the struggle between Myalism and Obeah fits the procession neatly, for the battle was in a sense against Obeah men generally rather than simply sorcery (Williams, 1934: 247-8). The Christianized Myalists failed to keep the concepts of Obeah and sorcery distinct. They believed that anyone who worked Obeah for good might also use it for evil, and in their zeal they attacked magicians indiscriminately. A person who the week before had hired an Obeah man to cure his child might, in the mass hysteria of a Myal meeting, accuse the same man of sorcery. The Obeah men, it seems, became the scapegoats for a frustrated and troubled society which used every available weapon to defeat them (Madden, 1835, I: 93; Williams, 1932: 188-9; 1934: 247-8).

Like other religious methods, the Myal procession failed to solve Jamaican problems and died out within two years. The belief that sorcery lay at the root of the trouble persisted, however, and similar movements flared up again and again during the next two decades. In 1857 a major outbreak occurred in Kingston itself, and a few smaller ones followed it (Gardner, 1909: 465; Curtin, 1955:170). We hear no more of it after 1860, when both Myalism and Native Baptism became incorporated in the second, more extensive phase of the movement to regain social equilibrium.

Whereas the great Myal procession began with Africans and then incorporated Christian characteristics, the Great Revival of 1860 and 1861 started with the missionaries themselves and became progressively more Africanoid in character. The missionaries, disheartened by their failing efforts, had found renewed hope and energy in the revivalistic movement that stirred the United States and Great Britain in 1858 and 1859. They began to promote revivalism in Jamaica by increasing the intensity of their sermons, holding special meetings, and begging their followers to receive the Spirit of God (Gardner, 1909: 465). In October of 1860 the movement took hold among the Moravians in St. Elizabeth, and from there spread rapidly through the island (Underhill, 1881: 302-14; Curtin, 1955: 171). It is significant that the Moravians, who had not participated in the Myal movement but who faced the same problems as those who did, were the first to feel the excitement of revivalism. It is significant also that as the revival moved from their congregations to less thoroughly acculturated groups it began to acquire characteristics that the missionaries deemed less than Christian. In Gardner's words:

"Like a mountain stream, clear and transparent as

> it springs from the rock, but which becomes foul and repulsive as impurities are mingled with it in its onward course, so with this most extraordinary movement. In many of the central districts of the island the hearts of thoughtful and good men were gladdened by what they witnessed in the changed lives and characters of the people for whom they long seemed to have laboured in vain; but in too many districts there was much of wild extravagance and almost blasphemous fanaticism. This was especially the case where the native Baptists had any considerable influence. Among these, the manifestations occasioned by the influence of the Myal men, as described previously, were very common" (Gardner, 1909: 465).

Still unadjusted to the new social order and plagued by frustrations, the freedmen turned to revivalism, like the missionaries, almost with desperation. Many, however, misinterpreted the latter. By encouraging their listeners to "get the spirit," the missionaries inadvertently encouraged the same kind of behavior that they had previously denounced and in effect reinforced cult beliefs and practices. This tacit approval of groups like the Native Baptists, who already had "the spirit," heightened their prestige and gave impetus to their growth. However, various groups conceptualized the identity and functions of the spirit differently and gave diverse interpretations to religious experience, to the missionaries' despair.

The sectarians viewed religious experience as "getting religion"--as being suddenly filled with a personal knowledge of God and with a realization of the great spiritual truths. They fell to their knees, prayed passionately in loud voices, confessed their sins, and testified to their salvation. They shouted "Hallelujah" and "Praise the Lord," and occasionally fell prostrate upon the floor. Participants tried harder than ever to convert others and showed increased piety in their daily lives (Underhill, 1881: 302-14; Gardner, 1909: 455). Among the Native Baptists revivalism promoted little qualitative change in beliefs and practices. The cultists began to call themselves "revivalists," increased their activities and collected many new members, but retained their Native Baptist character. "The spirit," who was as often an angel as the Spirit of God, continued to possess them as before, manifesting himself in deep trances, wild dancing, visions, and glossolalia. He sometimes gave them the powers of prophecy, divination, and curing (Beckwith, 1923: 32-3; Curtin, 1955: 171; De Lisser, 1913: 134). The Myalists reacted similarly, giving their practices still more Africanoid interpretations. To them the revival was in large part a continuation and expansion of the great Myal procession and remained focused on such practical aspects of religion as curing and divination. They emphasized ghosts and angels as causative agents of religious experience, but prayed to God, read the Bible, and considered themselves true revivalists. Such violent behaviors as flagellation and rapid whirling became even more pronounced among them than before (Williams, 1934: 98-9; Waddell, 1863: 194; Gardner, 1909: 455). Both Native Baptist and Myalist forms of revivalism occurred in rural villages as well as in the towns and on the estates.

As the revival progressed in time, less orthodox behaviors and interpretations occurred more extensively. In contrast to the missionaries, the cultists felt that these latter forms constituted higher orders of revivalism than the milder, more insipid patterns of the sectarians, and natural progressions from them. It is interesting to note that the attitudes of present-day cultists reflect this situation. Talented and experienced cultists can "work the '61 order of revival" while lesser figures can get up only to the "'60 order."

The Great Revival subsided after 1861, but it had effects which have been felt throughout Jamaica ever since. It stimulated the formation of new religious groups and enabled old ones to justify their practices and thus maintain their statuses in the face of growing values on Christianity. The cultists changed their practices but little, but they became more "Christian" by revising their terminology and putting more verbal stress on sectarian concepts. Thus we hear little about Native Baptists after 1860, but read instead about various "revivalist" groups. The revival promoted some modifications of native religion, but it seems to have functioned more significantly to solidify existing Afro-Christian syntheses and to provide solid foundations for their persistence.

Post-Revival Developments

The Great Revival left the most pressing problems of the freedmen unsolved. Conditions had been growing steadily worse, and the early 1860's were years of deep economic depression. Prices had dropped, estates had gone bankrupt, and industries had failed, leaving thousands of people destitute. Importation of East Indian laborers had put many freedmen out of work and had also brought them cholera.[7] Political and legal repression intensified the situation. The planters blamed the blacks for their problems, and being vastly outnumbered, feared them. They enacted stringent laws against them, restricted their social rights, and used various other methods of keeping them under control. Missionary campaigns on behalf of the Negroes only increased the planters' antipathy. Local magistrates, siding with the planters, tended to rule against the blacks in legal cases and often abused their authority to maintain white supremacy.[8]

Failing to find enduring satisfactions through religion and having no recourse to law, some freedmen resorted to a third alternative--rebellion. The most significant revolt occurred in 1865 when Paul Bogle, a Native Baptist preacher, led several hundred settlers to protest a particularly irritating decision of magistrates in the town of Morant Bay. Tensions were high at the time, and the protest flared into a major incident. It failed, but convinced the planters of their failure at self-government and led them to turn the island's management back to the Crown. Gradual improvement of conditions for the freedmen resulted.[9] The Morant Bay rebellion exemplifies the attitudes of many Jamaicans toward government, law, and other kinds of white dominance--attitudes which have continued to reinforce native religious institutions and to motivate religious movements.

These sentiments were in part responsible for the demise of the English missionary movement. Jamaicans wanted Negro ministers, and many broke off from the churches during the 1860's to form independent sects. The churches finally had to replace their missionaries with trained Jamaicans (Gardner, 1909: 460-4; Curtin, 1955: 162-6; Davis, 1942: 17-19). This did not mean the end of proselytization in Jamaica, however. The Church of England ended its long dormant period and began seeking members from all classes. The Roman Catholics expanded their activities and began working among the freedmen (Olivier, 1933: 100-4; Curtin, 1955: 166-8; Davis, 1942: 14-15, 23). Also, American evangelists of various sects entered Jamaica during this period. The Society of Friends and the Seventh-Day Adventists both established higher educational institutions as well as churches, and thus offered opportunities for social advancement to their followers. They effected more complete acculturation than most other groups, but only among relatively small congregations (Davis, 1942: 19-21). This was also the tendency of high-prestige churches like the Congregationalists and such deviant sects as the Salvation Army and Jehovah's Witnesses.

In contrast, sects like the Church of Christ and the Church of God became quite popular and influential, but underwent developments analogous to those of the early Baptists. Their emotional emphasis appealed to the lower classes, but also attracted incipient native leaders who then broke off to form independent groups. Like the Native Baptists, such leaders incorporated native beliefs and practices into their systems. For example, the writer observed an independent Church of Christ meeting which consisted largely of efforts to locate some Obeah which had allegedly been buried by enemies in the earthen floor of the church. The Pentecostal sect, with its extreme emphasis on religious experience and its minimal inter-group organization, was especially conducive to the formation of such splinter groups.

These new sects intensified the spirit of competition in Jamaican religion, for each attempted to gain as many members as possible. To compete successfully the leaders had to offer material as well as spiritual inducements to potential converts, and to this end many of them turned to faith healing of one sort or another. The native leaders, who depended for their livelihood upon religious activities, practiced more elaborate kinds of curing. Some, like cult leaders, used Obeah. Occasionally such a healer won fame and attracted a large following. New sects, cults, and religious movements arose periodically in this way. Most of them involved an emphasis on water as a healing agent and conductor of spiritual power.

As noted above, African beliefs in water spirits survived in Jamaica, and although we read little of them for decades they reappear, influenced by European ideas about Mermaids, in the post-emancipation Myal procession. Also, water itself played an important role in Myal ceremonies.[10] Missionary emphasis on baptism and Native Baptist reinterpretation of this rite as a curative practice reinforced beliefs in the efficacy of water, as did the Christian concept of holy water. Thus supported from all sides, water took on great significance in later religious developments. Many emergent sects and cults stressed its use in curing.[11] The most significant of these post-revival developments occurred around the turn of the century when a man named Alexander Bedward gained prominence as a healer and prophet.

Bedward instituted and sustained for almost three decades a religious movement that rivaled the Great Revival in extent and intensity. After being converted in Central America while traveling, he returned to Jamaica and joined an independent sect in August Town, a small village just outside Kingston. He rose rapidly in the sect and succeeded to the leadership in the early 1890's. Almost overnight he transformed the small, local group into an island-wide movement with thousands of followers (De Lisser, 1913: 133-4). One day in 1893 he announced a vision in which he had learned that the Hope River, a small stream near August Town, had healing properties. Whoever bathed in it with faith, he said, would be cured of all their physical ailments. He dispensed the healing water to two hundred persons, of whom the seven faithful were cured. News of the miracle spread rapidly, and soon thousands of Jamaicans were flocking to August Town to bathe in the river or to procure water from it for sick relatives at home. Many remained to join the sect.[12]

Bedward built a church--the "Jamaica Baptist Free Church"--and within a few years had established branch missions in other parts of the island. Later he sent evangelists even to the Central American mainland (Beckwith, 1923: 44; Pullen-Burry, 1905: 142). He was at one time arrested, declared insane, and committed to the asylum, but gained release on a technical flaw in the court proceedings. As in the famous Father Divine case, this incident may have contributed to his popularity. A disastrous earthquake which nearly destroyed Kingston in 1907 also aided his movement. Crowds of Bedwardites paraded the streets in ceremonial attire, proclaiming the earthquake to be a warning of Judgment Day and entreating the townspeople to join the sect and be saved. Hundreds complied, for it was rumored that Bedward had prophesied the disaster (Williams, 1934: 2-3).

Bedward held weekly services and frequent prayer meetings in which singing, religious experience, preaching, and extemporaneous prayers were the main features. The color white, symbolizing purity, was used extensively, particularly for clothing. The members fasted three times weekly, from midnight to noon, afterwards holding communion tables from which bread and water were served. Bedward performed weekly healing ceremonies for thousands of people. His quarterly baptisms also had curative functions. Three-day fasts preceded the baptisms, which resembled Baptist immersions and like them validated membership in the sect. Initiates often had attacks of possession during these ceremonies and had to be helped out of the water. At some baptisms hundreds of candidates received the sacrament. Organizationally and ideologically, as well as ceremonially, the sect was comparatively orthodox, modeled on the Apostolic plan. Bedward was ordained, no doubt by his followers, as a bishop, and held the title of Shepherd. He appointed pastors, elders, evangelists, and subsidiary officers such as "mothers" and "station guards" to assist him. He made obedience to his teachings the fundamental principle of his doctrine and placed great emphasis on the Holy Ghost as the agent of religious experience.

Bedward claimed at different times to be the reincarnations of various prophets such as Moses and John the Baptist. In 1920 he outdid himself, discarding his title of Shepherd and announcing himself as Christ returned. He predicted his ascent to heaven, the destruction of the white race, and the reign of Bedwardism on earth. Thousands of followers sold or gave away their possessions and attended the proposed ascent on the last day of that year, but Bedward postponed it. He put off his flight several times, in fact, and when it finally looked as if he would carry out the plan the government had him seized and committed again to the insane asylum. He died there some years later (Simpson, 1956:337). Deprived of its guiding and moving force, the movement quickly declined, and its various sub-groups split off to form independent sects and cults. Orthodox Bedwardism still exists, but again as a small, local sect in August Town. It is carried on today by a few elderly, celibate women who tend the church, home, and grave of their departed leader and worship him as God. The Hope River lost its healing properties upon Bedward's death.

The last great Jamaican religious movement died with Bedward, but dimmer lights continued the tradition of prophetic and curative native leadership within limited areas. Their groups remained formally independent and developed wide variations in ideology and ritual, but they followed general patterns, interacted with one another, and became grouped into larger sects and cults. Bedwardism had considerable influence upon at least one cult and upon many of the independent sects, which as we have seen stemmed directly from organized church bodies. Some cults flared into local prominence for brief periods and then faded back into obscurity, while others continued up to the present. We turn now to the latter.

The Rise of Contemporary Cults

There are in Jamaica today five main cults: Zion Revival, Pocomania, Convince, Kumina, and Ras Tafari. The first four fall neatly into the Afro-Christian continuum, but the last is of a different order and must be considered separately. The origins and developments of these cults are, in the main, obscure, but their ideologies and ceremonial forms reflect various antecedent religions to different degrees. On the basis of these apparent affinities--their similarities to former religious groups--we can trace their probable lines of development. Figure 2 summarizes their most important antecedents as inferred from these data. We will discuss each of them in turn.

Zion Revival is the most nearly orthodox of contemporary Jamaican cults, and also the most prestigious, popular,

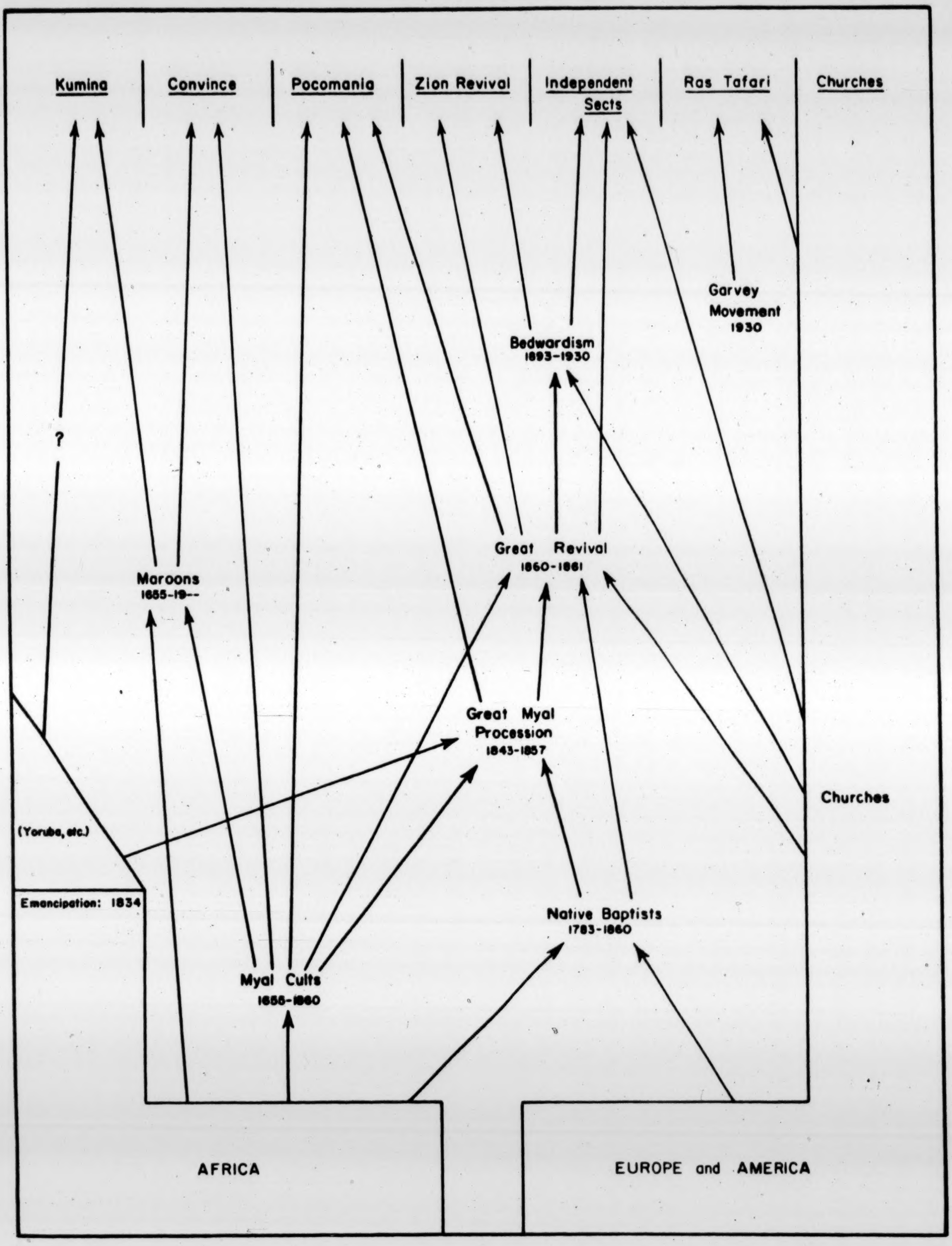

Kumina
Convince
Pocomania
Zion Revival
Independent Sects
Ras Tafari
Churches
Garvey Movement 1930
Bedwardism 1893-1930
?
Great Revival 1860-1861
Maroons 1655-19--
Great Myal Procession 1843-1857
Churches
(Yoruba, etc.)
Emancipation: 1834
Native Baptists 1783-1860
Myal Cults 1655-1860
AFRICA
EUROPE and AMERICA

Fig. 2. Historical Relationships of Jamaican Religious Groups.

and widely distributed. It has at least one representative band in almost every rural district and groups of various sizes in all the cities and towns. Its popularity and strength demonstrate clearly the steady shift toward Christian orthodoxy that has marked recent Jamaican religious history. The cult shows similarities to the Native Baptist groups and the Baptist classes of the pre-emancipation area and probably has antecedents in them. It assumed many of its distinctive characteristics during the Great Revival, however, and may be said to have originated in that movement. Most of its members recognize this origin and call themselves '60 or '61 revivalists.

The Great Revival itself died out in 1862, but stimulated the formation of numerous independent revivalist bands which survived it. The doctrines and rituals of these groups diverged somewhat in subsequent years, but in many cases communication among them limited their differences. The Bedwardite movement gave impetus to revivalism and influenced many of these groups. Indeed, it drew many of them into its organization for a time, and again consolidated their ideologies and ritual forms. These groups apparently developed Zion Revivalism, while more deviant revivalist bands which resisted Bedwardite influence evolved the Pocomania cult discussed below.[13] The independent Zion Revival groups have again diverged, both from Bedwardism and from one another, but they still exhibit Bedwardite elements and vary around a single basic pattern. Recent changes in the cult have been relatively slight, and Beckwith's description of a St. Elizabeth revivalist group in 1920 fits quite well many present-day bands.[14]

Zion Revival shows influence from sects as well. The groups faced strong competition, particularly in the cities where American evangelists concentrated, and in order to survive had to draw to their meetings large numbers of paying spectators and potential converts. To this end they adopted the Salvation Army practices of drumming and holding street meetings. Their drums are European in style, played with sticks in the European manner, and used only to announce meetings and accompany non-sacred songs, not for calling spirits as in Africa. The drumming complex of this cult does not appear to be an African survival, then, as users of Herskovits' method might conclude. Zion Revivalists have also adopted the sectarian practice of holding religious plays and recitations. Some leaders have added Christian faith healing to their native curing techniques.

The cult has borrowed from other sources as well. For example, all leaders and many lesser members wear elaborate, colored ceremonial turbans, which apparently diffused from East Indian indentured servants imported during the late nineteenth century.[15] Like other ritual features, these serve to make ceremonies more colorful and thus more attractive to spectators. Most Africanoid traits of Zion Revival are more subtle and have been reinterpreted in Christian terms, as a later, more detailed analysis will show. Indeed, the cultists consider theirs to be the highest form of Christianity and look down upon members of the closely related Pocomania cult.

Pocomania is more Africanoid than Zion Revival and has less popularity and prestige. Composed of numerous independent bands which adapt their beliefs and practices to different circumstances, it changes relatively rapidly and subsumes a wide range of variation. Some groups, responding to pressures toward greater orthodoxy, have taken on Zion Revivalist characteristics, while others remain more Africanoid or deviate in other directions. This variation, together with discrepancies in the use of the term Pocomania, has given rise to some confusion in the literature regarding the nature of the cult. The present sketch should clarify the situation and provide a basis for later, more detailed analyses of specific Pocomania groups.

Pocomania probably had its origins in the early Myal cults and received subsequent influences from the Native Baptists. The post-emancipation Myal procession was apparently directly ancestral to it, judging from similarities between the two. Members themselves trace Pocomania back to the Great Revival, and it was during the later, more esoteric phases of this movement that the cult acquired many of its modern characteristics. Its subsequent development by-passed the sectarian Bedwardite movement that influenced and lent prestige to Zion Revivalism. De Lisser, Emerick, and Beckwith describe early twentieth century revivalistic groups which may be ancestral to Pocomania. The cult has become modified and elaborated since their studies, but remains recognizable (De Lisser, 1913: 134-43; Emerick, 1916: 48-9; Beckwith, 1929: 176-82; cf. Williams, 1932: 172-5). Although it apparently grew up in isolated rural districts, Pocomania now finds its greatest and most distinctive expression in the cities. Informed observers believe that it is dying out and has made its last stronghold in Kingston. Pocomania bands occur in other urban centers and in a few rural parishes, but in many areas the cult has virtually disappeared.[16]

The derivation of the term Pocomania lies hidden in the past and open to conflicting theories. Ranny Williams, a local expert on the cult, believes that the name antedates the English conquest of the island. He cites an oral tradition that imputes the appellation to the overseer of an early Spanish plantation. This overseer, the story goes, noticed that a number of his slaves left the estate one Sunday each month and returned the following morning exhausted and unable to work well. He trailed them one night to a cave in the mountains, where he witnessed a weird ceremony in which they danced wildly, chanted songs in strange languages, spun around like tops, rolled on the ground, and performed other esoteric gyrations. Thinking that they had gone crazy and resigning himself to their loss, the Spaniard returned to the estate. When the slaves came to work the next morning acting normally, however, he had to conclude that they had only _poco manía_--"a little madness" (Williams, 1955). This early derivation seems unlikely, for there is no indication that the term was used before the present century. It does not appear in print until 1929, when Beckwith describes some "Pukkumerians" whom she had studied some years previously in St. Mary. She explains that these cultists practiced counter-sorcery and suggests that the name might have originated in the Jamaican English phrase "pick-them-here," which refers to the digging up of buried Obeah. Yet, even at the time of her study the term connoted "slightly crazy," suggesting a Spanish etymology (Beckwith, 1929: 176-82; cf. Williams, 1932: 172-5).

Whatever its origins, "Pocomania" is today a term of derogation, and as such its uses and referents vary with the status and bias of the speaker. Upper and middle-class people apply it to all forms of revivalism, and even some lower-class persons fail to recognize the distinction between Pocomania and Zion Revival. Zion Revivalists, not wanting to be identified with the disfavored cult, hasten to assure whoever seems interested that the differences are great. Pocomanians resent the appellation and call themselves Revivalists. Some of them use the term Pocomania in still another sense, applying it to rival bands whom they distrust and suspect of sorcery. In so doing they help to maintain the general belief in a mythical cult of malevolent devil-worshipers. "Real" Pocomanians, then, are always in some other district. The investigator can never find them, just as he can never meet real sorcerers (cf. Simpson, 1954: 2; 1956: 342). Moore claims that three distinct revivalistic cults--Revival, Zion Revival, and Pocomania--occur in southern St. Thomas, but he may have been misled by such accusations (Moore, 1954: 60-2).

Simpson, in contrast, says that "the differences between Pocomania and Revival Zion are, more often than not, hard to discern," and for the most part he does not distinguish them in his analysis (Simpson, 1956: 342). Yet, he recognizes some differences: "The Pocomania label may be applied to a number of cults in West Kingston which are characterized by more frequent use of conjuring, more extreme techniques of healing, less emphasis on preaching and more emphasis on singing and dancing, and, perhaps, greater emotional instability among the leaders" (Simpson, 1956: 402; cf. Kerr, 1952: 213). Other differences occur as well. Pocomanians, for example, never hold street meetings and rarely use drums. Male Pocomania leaders are titled Shepherd or Father, don long gowns at ceremonies, and seldom use turbans, while male Zion Revivalist leaders, called Captains or Leaders, typically wear suits and wrap their heads. Most important, Zion Revivalists work exclusively with heavenly spirits while Pocomanians emphasize ghosts. This difference is invariable--the Pocomanian who renounces his duppies becomes automatically a bastard Zion Revivalist, and the Zion Revivalist who lets ghosts possess him is always rejected by his fellows and dubbed a Pocomanian (cf. Seaga, 1956).

The main changes in Pocomania since the Great Revival involve, like those in Zion Revival, ways of insuring cult survival under highly competitive conditions. Most of them originated in the cities and some have not yet diffused to rural areas. Whereas Zion Revivalists met this problem by adopting street meetings, drumming, and sectarian traits, however, Pocomanians developed spectacles, parades, and theatrics. In so doing they borrowed such Catholic and Anglican features as ceremonial robes and processions, reinterpreting and modifying them, but utilized their own ingenuity and non-sectarian sources for many innovations. The most striking of their recent developments involves Hindu and Moslem practices.

Impressed by the strange behaviors of Indians and other ethnic groups, Jamaican Negroes came to believe that the ghosts of these people were also different--more powerful and malevolent than their own (cf. Beckwith, 1929: 98; Hurston, 1938: 60-1). Pocomanians took it upon themselves to control such duppies and began inviting them to ceremonies. Indian ghosts came and possessed certain members, inducing them to dress, speak, dance, and otherwise behave in the Indian manner. The colorful attire and jewelry and the spectacular dances of these members attracted large crowds to meetings, and being thus adaptive the complex grew. It soon developed into a distinct sub-cult with special ceremonies, separate phases of regular ceremonies, and a definite structural and ideological framework within Pocomania. It is interesting to note that this movement occurs almost entirely within the Negro community. The writer knows of only one full Indian who belongs to the cult, and oddly enough the spirit who possesses him is a Negro.

Non-sectarian innovations from the United States have affected another aspect of Pocomania, again with respect to competition. Most cult leaders specialized in Obeah, and some derived good incomes from this practice. However, the influx of Christian faith-healers and the development of better medical facilities reduced their profits considerably and forced them to seek new techniques of curing. Many, particularly in the cities, turned to the Western magical practices published in occultist books by the De Lawrence Company of Chicago (cf. Kerr, 1952: 147-8; Simpson, 1956: 343, 361-2; Williams, 1934: 100-3, 135; Hogg, 1961). These books are illegal in Jamaica, but many find their way past customs by devious means. Since this kind of magic is Western, appears in books, and works automatically rather than through spirit media, Jamaicans consider it scientific and thus quite powerful. They patronize more readily the Pocomania leaders who use it, thereby lending them prestige. In the cities this "Science" is gradually replacing Obeah.

Zion Revival and Pocomania, then, have adapted to new conditions and successfully met competition from the sects. The more Africanoid cults, on the other hand, have tended to resist change and seem to be declining. The Convince cult, known in some localities as Fankey or Convince Flenkee, lies next to Pocomania on the Afro-Christian continuum but has much less prestige and popularity. It is now restricted to the easternmost parishes of the island. Convince may have originated among the early Myal cults, which it resembles, and as the present writer has shown elsewhere probably developed either among the Maroons or under their influence (Hogg, 1960). It apparently by-passed the Great Revival, and throughout its history resisted all but the most superficial Christian influences. Members use the Bible, recite Christian prayers, and sing hymns in their ceremonies, but have no dealings with Christian deities. They worship exclusively the ghosts of former cultists and take great pride in the belief that their religion is African in character. Leaders use their spirits, many of whom come from Africa, to work Obeah. This cult, too, will be described in greater detail in a later chapter.

Kumina, the most African of the Jamaican cults, also appears to have Maroon origins. It occurs only in St. Thomas and Kingston, primarily among persons claiming descent from or affinities with the Maroons of the Blue Mountains. Another name for the cult, Kuruma, may be cognate with "Coromantee," the term formerly used to designate Gold Coast Negroes. According to the only extensive description of Kumina, its members worship African gods and ancestral spirits, speak African languages, and hold ceremonies similar to those of the Gold Coast.[17] Kumina may also have antecedents in the early Myal cults. Members use the term "myal" to designate spirit possession, and their ceremonies bear resemblances to the ancient Myalist rites. Kumina chiefs, like Convince and Pocomania leaders, use their spirits to work Obeah. The present study cannot consider in detail either this cult or Ras Tafari, the last major Jamaican religion.

Ras Tafari is as much a politico-religious movement as a cult. It has religious form but primarily political purposes. Arising among lower-class people who are violently dissatisfied with their social and economic conditions, it emphasizes the perennial resentment against whites and constitutes a reaction against Western dominance. It centers in Kingston and has relatively few adherents outside the corporate urban area. Ras Tafari originated in 1930 with Marcus Garvey's back-to-Africa campaign, and retains the nativistic character of that movement. There are no indications that it has antecedents in any of the native Jamaican religions discussed above.[18]

Ras Tafari presents a strange twist of Jamaican beliefs and values. It emphasizes anti-white, anti-church, and anti-Western sentiments, but is quite sectarian in character and shows few if any African-derived patterns. However, its members maintain that Christianity itself is African. They believe that Biblical personages were Africans and that present-day Negroes are reincarnations of them. The name Ras Tafari refers to Haile Selassie, the Emperor of Ethiopia --the living God. He is also black, the reincarnation of a black Christ and the final embodiment of Jehovah. He is organizing forces for the revolution and preparing the millenium, which will see Negro domination of the world. The cultists expect to join him in Ethiopia when the time is ready.

Members of the cult believe that these truths are revealed in the Bible, which the whites altered as a part of their plan to keep Negroes in subjugation. Ras Tafari leaders, however, have decoded the scriptures and unveiled their true meaning. Like sectarians, then, they validate their doctrine by interpreting the Word of God. Their meetings, often held on street corners to spread this doctrine, minimize emotion and maintain an intellectual tone. The possession, curing, dancing, and elaborate ritual paraphernalia that characterize other cults are conspicuously absent. Ras Tafari has built on pre-existing cultural patterns, but through selective emphasis has evolved a new, quite distinct religious synthesis.

Summary and Transition

The transition from slave to free society involved serious problems of adjustment. Emancipation promoted a radical reorganization of society for which new cultural patterns had to be developed. The freedmen found themselves in new physical and social environments, facing strange and unfamiliar situations and problems, and having no model to guide them had to proceed by trial and error. Many turned to religion for resolution of their troubles and for ways to regain control of social phenomena. At first they joined Christian churches and Native Baptist groups, and those who lived in rural free villages found these religions satisfying. Freedmen who remained on the estates or moved to the city faced greater social and economic difficulties, and found little solace in the teachings of the missionaries. They finally resorted to a Christianized form of Myalism to fight the Obeah which they blamed for many of their troubles, but this also failed. Thousands turned as a last resort to the Great Revival, which the missionaries had instigated but which also reinforced the syncretized native religious systems. The revival demonstrated the strength of native forms of Christianity, and in addition attested the freedmen's preference for Negro religious leaders. It marked the end of the great Jamaican missionary movement and the formation of several new syncretic cults.

The introduction of new sectarian groups after the revival insured a continued shift toward Christian orthodoxy in Jamaica, but also stimulated religious competition and innovation. The native but sectarian Bedwardite movement illustrated the results of persistent Christian influence, and at the same time reinforced the revivalistic emphasis of Jamaican religion and the prestige of black, prophetic leaders. Contemporary cults, for the most part, continue these tendencies. The most popular of them are also the most nearly orthodox, although they retain African orientations. Even these, however, have had to adapt to changing social and economic conditions. In order to meet competition from the sects they have been forced to borrow from various sources and to make innovations of their own. The cults that have resisted change, refused to accept Christian influence, and failed to adapt themselves to new situations are gradually dying out.

The various cults have adapted to their social environments in different ways, and various groups within each cult have developed variations in response to diverse environmental conditions. The following chapters present detailed analyses of the varied religious responses occurring in a single community and of the adaptations of a single cult, Pocomania, to different social environments. In these chapters the writer will also attempt to characterize the total

Jamaican religious configuration and to indicate how the cults help to maintain cultural patterns and traditions that have run the course of Jamaican history.

Chapter 5

ORANGE RIVER: A RURAL JAMAICAN COMMUNITY

Introductory Statement

The Jamaica of today, just like Curtin's "Two Jamaicas" of the slavery period, may be said to subsume two cultural traditions. On the one hand Western civilization exerts increasing influence, while on the other a native Jamaican culture pattern, developed from the early Africanoid synthesis, continues to dominate large areas of behavior. The relative force of each tradition varies among different sections of the population. Native Jamaican influences center among the lower classes and the socially and geographically isolated, while modern Western culture has its greatest effect upon the upper classes and others who come into close contact with representatives of the West.

Religion, in both its institutional and informal aspects, exhibits these two traditions more clearly, perhaps, than do most other areas of culture. Persons who follow more closely the native Jamaican patterns not only learn to take a different religious approach to their problems than do those who are more fully acculturated, but they also have to adapt their religious responses to different kinds of problems and situations. The present chapter examines some of the more salient sub-cultural variations which influence religion in one rural Jamaican community.

The Community in Context

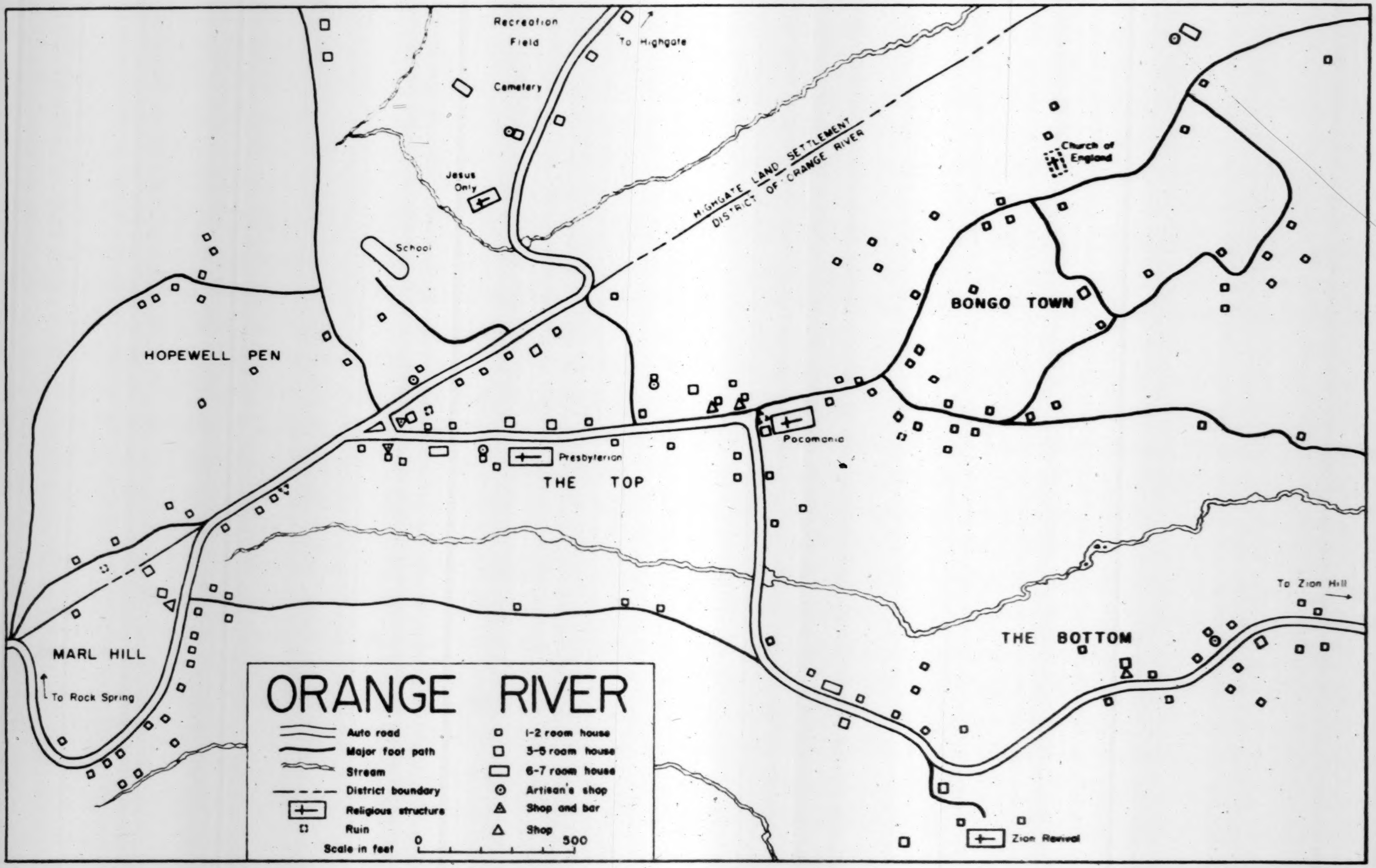
Perching precariously atop a limestone ridge which continually loses ground to the erosive action of several swift streams, the village of Orange River overlooks deep valleys on three sides. A mile and a half southeast and almost a thousand feet below the community, the little town of Richmond lies in a fertile pocket at the confluence of the Orange and Flint Rivers. On slightly higher ground two miles north of Richmond and the same distance northeast of Orange River, another town, Highgate, forms the third apex of a triangle which has social as well as spatial dimensions. The facilities of both towns serve the inhabitants of the village and connect it with the larger centers of Jamaican population.. Although they live a scant eight miles from the north coast and depend to a large extent upon the northern banana-shipping centers for their income, the villagers travel oftener to the larger southern cities of Spanish Town and Kingston.

To reach Orange River from Kingston, a distance of about forty miles, one may take the train or a bus to either Highgate or Richmond but must rely on private transportation facilities beyond these points. From Highgate a gravel and dirt parochial road, passable for motor cars during all but the wettest seasons, follows a stream up the steep slope through forests and banana fields to emerge suddenly upon the hilltop village. Here it is joined by a similar road from Richmond and continues in a westerly direction, following a second stream down the other side of the ridge to the village of Rock Spring. From there it rises again to connect with other roads leading deeper into the mountains of Western St. Mary.

The route from Richmond is shorter but steeper. It goes first to Zion Hill, a peasant community about a mile south of Orange River; then turns to follow a third stream up the hillside past closely-spaced houses and shops, entering the lower end of the village and later joining the road from Highgate. Because of its steep slope and dirt surface, this road becomes impassable for automobiles after even moderate rains. The villagers usually bypass Zion Hill on their way to Richmond, turning off the road to take a steeper but shorter survey track through the woods. The settlement pattern of the village follows these routes in characteristic ribbon-development fashion, its outskirts overlapping those of the adjacent communities.

Orange River straddles the boundary between two administrative districts, one under the jurisdiction of Highgate and the other of Richmond. This situation, which has implications for present social relations within the village, has its roots in the historical development of the region. Originally the Highgate-Rock Spring road formed part of the boundary between two immense estates devoted to sugar production. The larger, Richmond Estate, had its headquarters near the present town of Richmond, where the old sugar fac-

Fig. 3. Sketch Map of the Village of Orange River.


Recreation Field
Cemetery
To Highgate
Jesus Only
School
HIGHGATE LAND SETTLEMENT
DISTRICT OF ORANGE RIVER
Church of England
BONGO TOWN
HOPEWELL PEN
Presbyterian
Pocomania
THE TOP
MARL HILL
To Rock Spring
To Zion Hill
THE BOTTOM
Zion Revival
ORANGE RIVER
Auto road
Major foot path
Stream
District boundary
Religious structure
Ruin
1-2 room house
3-5 room house
6-7 room house
Artisan's shop
Shop and bar
Shop
Scale in feet
0
500

tory now forms a part of a prison farm. The other, Orange River Estate, lay to the south and west of the first and included the present district of Orange River.[1] After emancipation the owners of these estates allowed a number of their ex-slaves to settle in a pocket of marginal, almost useless land near the boundary at the top of the ridge. This locality, now called "Bongo Town,"[2] is today the poorest neighborhood of the village. The present residents, some of whom are descendants of the early settlers, still hold their plots by squatters' rights.

During the post-emancipation depression the estates went bankrupt and the planters returned to England. Orange River Estate was subdivided into several smaller properties and much of it sold off acre by acre to peasants, allowing the village to spread out along the road to the border of Richmond Estate and south toward Zion Hill. A property of several hundred acres on the Richmond-Highgate Road, planted mainly in bananas, still bears the name of Orange River. A nineteenth century speculator named Sir John Pringle bought Richmond Estate and converted the factory to logwood processing.[3] He imported large numbers of East Indians, whose descendants compose most of the large "coolie" population of present-day St. Mary. Sir John's venture failed, and he subdivided and sold the property only a few years before the rise of the banana trade brought prosperity to the region. The men who bought the section adjoining Orange River named it Hopewell and made good profits from bananas, cocoa, and coconuts. Richmond and Highgate both developed into centers of trade as a result of the banana trade.

Hopewell and Orange River properties provided the major sources of income for most of the villagers during the first half of the present century.[4] Around 1940 the government bought a large tract of Hopewell land near Richmond, opening on it an agricultural experiment station and providing employment for additional villagers. The people, however, like those in other parts of Jamaica, wanted land of their own. The depression of the 1930's intensified their dissatisfactions, which culminated in a large strike and anti-government protest in 1937. Responding quickly, the government began a land settlement program the following year. It bought up large properties on various parts of the island, divided them into small holdings, and sold them on long-term payment plans to qualified individuals. Hopewell was one such property, and became the Highgate Land Settlement in 1946.

Whether by coincidence or design, the administrators chose the section immediately adjacent to Orange River for a village development area, dividing it into house plots and providing larger areas for a school, a cemetery, and a recreation grounds. War veterans, who received two-thirds of their allotments free of charge, were assigned the village plots. A few of them remained in the village but most sold or leased their houses and lands to others, who have come from various parts of the island. Orange River thus includes two kinds of residents, the old settlers and the newcomers. Most of the latter live on the land settlement and trade in Highgate, while the old timers live south of the road and do business in Richmond. This division and its social effects raise problems in delimiting the community.

Strictly speaking, Orange River is neither a village nor a community. It forms not a discrete entity standing in social and geographic isolation from other, similar units, but rather one of several nuclei in the regional population pattern and field of social relationships. In many ways the several neighborhoods within Orange River form units more distinct than the village itself. The observer must define and delimit such a settlement somewhat arbitrarily. The present writer, limited by a scant three months' stay in a locality containing over six hundred inhabitants, had to devise a method of selecting informants. He settled on a concentric circle view of the settlement, which enabled him to concentrate his work in a single neighborhood and to do progressively less intensive and systematic research in wider areas. For want of better terms, "village" and "community" will hereafter denote the three neighborhoods within which most of the research took place. Figure 5 illustrates the village and its environs as thus viewed.

The outermost circle encloses the greater community,

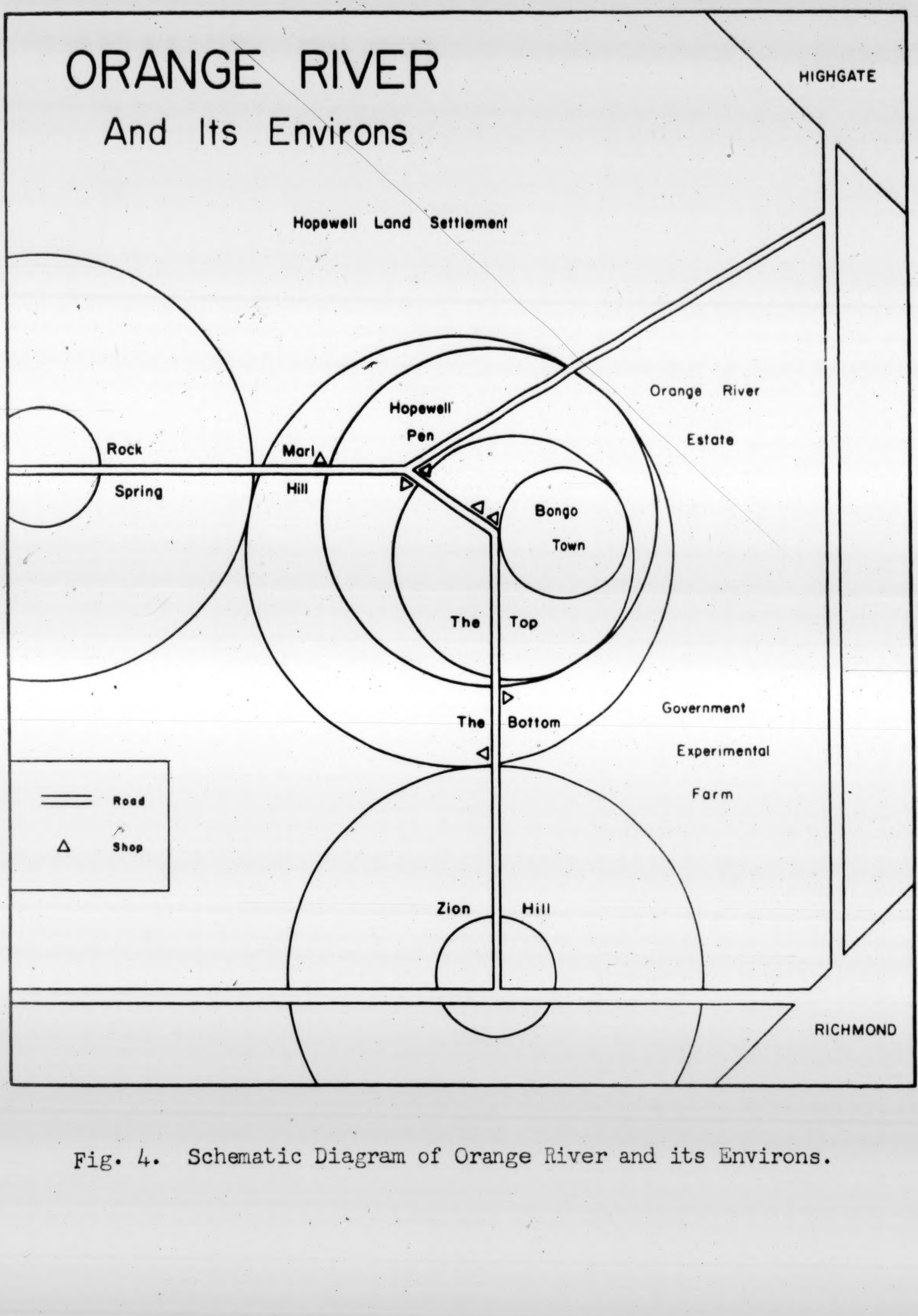

ORANGE RIVER
And Its Environs
HIGHGATE
Hopewell Land Settlement
Orange River Estate
Hopewell Pen
Rock Spring
Marl Hill
Bongo Town
The Top
The Bottom
Government Experimental Farm
Road
Shop
Zion Hill
RICHMOND

Fig. 4. Schematic Diagram of Orange River and its Environs.

including the entire district of Orange River plus that section of the Highgate Land Settlement whose residents regularly patronize Orange River facilities. Almost all of the people normally seen in the village live within this area. The second circle marks the boundary of the village proper as defined above. It includes all households whose members regularly trade at one or more of the four shops within it. Most of the research occurred inside this circle, which excludes the residents of Marl Hill and The Bottom. The third circle separates the newcomers of Hopewell Pen from the old settlers of The Top and Bongo Town. The former live on the land settlement and trade at the two shops at the junction, while the latter tend to patronize the shops at the entrance to Bongo Town. The residents of Bongo Town, who had expected first claim to the fertile Hopewell land, deeply resent the intrusion of the newcomers, who return their ill feelings. The two groups are thus mutually hostile, each claiming the other to foster dishonesty, immorality, treachery, and bigotry. The Top, separated from Bongo Town by the innermost circle, is a transitional and buffer zone between them. Its residents are mostly old settlers, but tend to be more progressive and sophisticated then the Bongo Towners and to accept the newcomers more readily. The writer, interested particularly in the more traditional cultural patterns, concentrated his research among the old settlers of Bongo Town.

Nestling amid a verdant growth of trees and bushes and removed from the dust and noise of the road, Bongo Town presents a pleasant scene to the visitor. Hardy trees like breadfruit, cocoa, coconut, and mango stand in moderate abundance among the stones and boulders that strew the ground. Here and there a stubborn or desperate resident has cleared away the rocks, piled them neatly in rows, and nursed a small garden or a few banana plants. The survey track that forms Bongo Town's main street proceeds eastward through the neighborhood, then drops suddenly down a precipitous hill through Orange River Estate to join the Highgate-Richmond road near the experiment farm. Numerous paths lead from this track to houses in the bush, and one goes to a deep pool in a stream where the women draw their water and wash clothing.

Bongo Town contains forty-six houses and about 170 persons. Most of the dwellings stand in small clusters, but several belonging to Indian families remain isolated and hidden. Few have more than two rooms. Built of hand-sawn lumber or bamboo wattle and roofed with coconut frond thatch or corrugated tin, they are in generally poor condition and offer dubious shelter from the elements. A family normally occupies but one room, which contains a bed and perhaps a cot, a table, some chairs or stools, a kerosene lamp, and some suitcases for storage. During dry weather the house serves mainly as a sleeping place. Most other activities take place in the yard or in the separate wattle-and-thatch kitchen. Each yard contains also a latrine, which receives periodic inspections from the public health officer. Some yards are surrounded by decorative hedges or flowers.

The Top extends along the Zion Hill road from the junction to a point at which the road drops abruptly down a steep slope to The Bottom. It is bisected by Mother Scott Gully, a small ravine created by a stream which provides water for the women of the neighborhood. Most of The Top's forty-one houses stand within a few feet of the road, some being protected from the dust by hedges or fences. As in Bongo Town and other neighborhoods, each yard has a separate latrine and kitchen. Houses are in general larger and in better condition than those of Bongo Town, and the residents rather more prosperous. The Top has a population of about 130 persons, almost a third of them Indians or part Indians. Here the two races have intermixed extensively, whereas in Bongo Town they have tended to remain separate. As in Bongo Town, the "coolies" tend to be more prosperous than the Negroes. In addition to its houses, The Top boasts two shops and the only substantial church building of the village. A Zion Revival camp--a small, open, bamboo wattle structure with a thatched roof--is located near the lower end of the neighborhood. The Pocomania camp, a larger building of similar construction, stands at the entrance to Bongo Town.

Hopewell Pen is the village development area of the land settlement. Situated on the top of the ridge, it lacks the luxuriant vegetation of The Top and Bongo Town and by contrast appears quite bare. A small stream rising near the center of the area divides it into two hills and provides water for the residents. Hopewell Pen has thirty houses, containing about 120 persons. Most of them stand on the hilltop just north of the junction; others are strung out along the Highgate road. Recently built by the government, they have two or three rooms, cement walls and tin roofs, and are in generally good repair. This neighborhood contains the schoolhouse, and on the far hill a little-used cemetery, a recreation grounds with a small dance pavilion, and the wattle-and-thatch camp of the local Pentecostal sect. Two shops, each with an attached rum bar, stand at the junction, where the men of the village congregate during their free time.

As the above description indicates, the neighborhoods of Orange River have social class as well as spatial dimensions. The poorest, most conservative, most traditionally oriented people tend to cluster in Bongo Town, while The Top and Hopewell Pen contain more progressive people of higher socio-economic class. The wealthiest families are less localized, but most of them live in The Top.

Social Class and Economic Behavior

Like most Jamaican villages, Orange River has a population composed largely of persons who, considered in relation to the total population of the island, must be assigned to the lower class. The wealthy aristocrats live almost entirely in urban areas, as do many middle-class persons of moderate means. However, some of the latter, mostly lesser planters, merchants, business men, and government officials, live in rural areas near their places of work. Orange River boasts a few; the headmaster of the local school, an accountant, a wealthy planter family, and a few Indians with large properties. Some other families stand on the verge of Jamaican middle class status and contain members who have achieved it.

These persons are distinguished from the lower class by dialect (they speak British rather than Jamaican English), by greater income and wealth, by more substantial and spacious housing and the use of hired domestics, and by other criteria. They tend to interact socially either among themselves or with persons of similar status outside the community. Racial differences complicate matters in Orange River, however, and the high-status Indians tend to form a distinct in-group within this class. Both Indians and Negroes normally send their children to school in Kingston and go there frequently for social and recreational purposes. Social climbers find entry into this class quite difficult, and few can achieve it within a single generation. They usually center their aspirations on their children, sending them away for schooling and training them in middle class values. Most persons thus trained feel that there is no "uplook" in Orange River and try to leave the village. Several Orange River families have members moving in middle class circles in Kingston and other urban centers.

The villagers distinguish five sub-categories within the lower class; "well-to-do," "independent," "ordinary," "poor-but-respectable," and "no-good." Their most important criteria are wealth and income, method of acquiring and utilizing wealth, and choice of friends. Since most persons have Negroid physical characteristics, race and color have little significance for class position in Orange River. Indians are not distinguished from Negroes in the evaluation of class status.

Because most "well-to-do" families in Orange River are upward mobile and contain members of middle-class status, and because there are so few of the latter in the village, the writer has combined these two categories for this analysis. They are designated the "comfortable" class. Likewise, the "independent" and "ordinary" categories are combined and termed the "ordinary" class, and the "poor-but-respectable" and "no-good" people are collectively called the "depressed" class.

Depressed-class persons own little or no land and must gain subsistence as agricultural laborers. They often supplement their meagre incomes by begging from more prosperous friends and relatives. They can seldom save money even for emergencies and are usually in debt. Ordinary-class people fare a little better. They own land enough to meet their needs or have specialized skills to exploit. Most of them own their houses, and some have extra land and houses to lease out. Many hire occasional laborers for such tasks as clearing land and planting. When necessary they can raise money for large purchases or emergencies. Comfortable-class persons include the shopkeepers, a few full-time specialists and craftsmen, and several moderately wealthy peasants. Most of them own land and hire local laborers to work it or help them with it. They often keep money laid by for use as capital.

Visiting and other forms of social interaction take place primarily within social classes, less often between members of adjacent categories, and rarely between comfortable and depressed-class persons. Thus, acceptance by other members is one criterion of class status. However, other variables, usually economic, obscure this pattern. For example, comfortable-class persons who control certain jobs and services are often surrounded by cliques of depressed-class men who hope to reap these benefits. A full understanding of social class in Orange River thus requires a knowledge of village economics.

Orange River is not, strictly speaking, a typical peasant community. Most villagers only recently acquired their land, and many still depend to a great extent upon wage labor.

Nevertheless, they grow most of their own food as well as some market produce, and they now control most of the land in the village. Land is held individually, although in practice spouses often pool their holdings and farm them as a unit. The writer found only one case of "family land," inherited and held jointly by several siblings.[5] Over half of the village land holdings are under five acres, and fewer than twenty per cent of them exceed ten acres. The Bongo Town plots are smallest, averaging less than an acre each. Few of them can support families, and their owners must find additional sources of income. The land settlement plots average about twelve acres, but most of them have been subdivided and leased out by absentee allottees.

No necessary relationship obtains between the land and that which grows upon it. A renter may have no rights over the trees or fruits on his land, and even the crops he plants revert to the owner upon termination of the agreement. Consequently, most persons prefer seven or nine year leases which give them rights to the permanent tree crops and insure a fair return on their labor. Despite their insistence on legal contracts, renters and lessees often complain of being cheated by owners. Yet, renting and leasing are common. The peasant likes to control several small plots of land at widely separate locations. He wants insurance against crop failures and market fluctuations, and achieves it by diversifying both his crops and his lands. Then, if a hurricane ruins his bananas, he will still have a yam field somewhere to support his family. A peasant may thus let out a plot of his own land and lease another somewhere else. Some villagers work land six or more miles from their homes.

The practice of individual inheritance contributes to this pattern of scattered land holdings, for a person may inherit plots from his mother, his father, and from other relatives. This practice also results in constant subdivision of fields and a consequent decrease in their size. Emigration helps little, and land becomes continually scarcer. The opening of the land settlement relieved the situation temporarily, but it also brought in numerous outsiders to occupy the newly available property. The villagers see this problem of land-poverty primarily in terms of money. Even landless persons face no shortage of produce, for they can obtain it from others in exchange for services or by begging. The main concern is the acquisition of money to buy things they cannot produce themselves. The writer heard frequently that "Orange River have plenty food, but it want money." Magico-religious practices seem to reflect this concern, for many of them are designed to obtain money but none attempt to increase crops.[6] Money is essential even to the diet--for purchasing fish, milk, legumes, meat, and other sources of the protein so deficient in Jamaican crops. Still, the villagers buy much flour, bread, and rice, which have nutritional qualities similar to those of their own products.

Custom as well as biological necessity dictates the need for money.

Villagers obtain some money by selling produce to the higglers, or market women, who resell it in the urban markets. The most valuable money crops are bananas, yams, breadfruit, taro, pineapples, limes, and avocadoes. Of dietary but not market importance are mangoes, papayas, akees (Blighia sapida), calalu (Indian kale), chocho (Sechium edule), plantains, sweet potatoes, and corn. Numerous other plants add variety to the local diet. Most peasants also raise a few strictly cash crops, notably annatto (a dyestuff), cacao, and pimento (allspice). Some grow a little coffee and kola nut as well. They sell these products as they ripen to the local shopkeepers, who resell them in bulk to exporters in Kingston.

The economic importance of all other crops fades before that of the banana. Every peasant grows as many bananas as possible, and most wage laborers produce them for more prosperous land holders. More than half the money entering the community comes directly from the banana trade. The area is fortunate in having a rich clay soil and an abundant rainfall, fulfilling the two major requirements of this ideal peasant crop. Bananas require little capital investment, yield fruit throughout the year, and bring relatively high prices. A tree matures within a year and produces but once, allowing the grower to expand or reduce his crop rapidly in response to market fluctuations. Bananas require relatively little care, do not exhaust the soil, and do not prevent the planting of other crops under the trees.[7] Perhaps most important, the peasant can produce bananas using only hand tools. He has few implements other than his all-purpose machete, or cutlass. With it he cuts away the undergrowth and the smaller trees, digs the holes for planting, and harvests the crop. He may use a fork to turn the soil, a spade to dig drainage ditches, and a rake for weeding, but without his cutlass he would be lost. For bananas he needs little else.[8]

Over two thirds of the villagers derive the greatest part of their livelihood directly from the land. Fewer than ten per cent of the local breadwinners devote their full time to other occupations. However, many villagers supplement their incomes by non-agricultural or semi-agricultural jobs or specialties, and perhaps a fourth of Orange River households depend upon these activities for large proportions of their incomes. A number of local men make fair wages loading bananas at the Highgate or Richmond stations, and some of the poorer villagers, both men and women, earn money carrying bananas to these stations on their heads. Three local residents have permanent, high-salaried positions with the Banana Growers Association, and several others hire out to local growers as specialists in spraying bananas to control disease. The government experimental farm provides permanent jobs for several young village men and offers intermittent work for others. Road construction and repair is a source of income for men during the dry season, and women can earn money breaking rocks for the stockpiles at any time of the year. Perhaps twenty local men work on the roads each winter, two of them making good money as contractors.

The village can support few full-time professionals or trade specialists, although a tailor and a cobbler keep shops there. The school headmaster and one teacher reside in the community, but only three other full time specialists--two accountants and a professional gambler--all of whom conduct their business elsewhere. Many villagers engage in part time specialization, however. Among them are two butchers, two carpenters, two painters, a tailor, three charcoal burners, three domestic servants, two dressmakers, two ice-cream vendors, an unofficial mailman and errand runner, three healers, three religious specialists, nine higglers, and four shopkeepers. The higglers travel about the community buying various garden commodities during the week to sell at the Kingston or Spanish Town markets on weekends. Many women occasionally take their own surplus products to sell in town when they need extra money or crave excitement and a change of scenery. As an occupation, however, higgling is risky.

A man and wife operate each of the four local shops. In no case does the shop provide the sole source of household income, although three have large, varied stocks and two include rum bars. All the shopkeepers farm sizeable holdings and three have trade specialties; thus they are among the wealthier villagers. Their shops carry all of the commodities needed daily in the community, the main items being bread, salt fish, rice, beans, flour, canned milk, sugar, kerosene, and tobacco. They do not, however, monopolize trade in the village. Itinerant vendors came irregularly with such items as cloth, crockery, baskets, tinware, and fresh fish, and a butcher sells beef and pork twice weekly. Ice-cream vendors operate every weekend and do good business at social functions. Finally, housewives exchange produce among themselves, each selling her surplus items and buying foods of which she runs short. A woman may sometimes buy produce to help out another even if she does not need it, knowing that at some future date she may have to obtain money in this way herself.

A final method of distribution and acquisition of money may be called charity. In addition to a number of sick and elderly persons who receive regular doles from the government, there are many who beg from more prosperous friends and relatives. This begging is institutionalized, and most villagers engage in it to some extent.[9] Most occurs among the poorer persons, however, and is necessary to the subsistence of some. One normally begs only from persons of higher status and greater wealth than himself, being careful not to beg too often from the same donors and frequently reciprocating with small favors. People with money feel their responsibilities and regularly give to beggars, knowing that the latter will help them when they need it.[10] Also, giving money raises and maintains one's status in the community. A wealthy but stingy man has few friends and enjoys lower prestige than more humble but generous neighbors. Begging, then, tends to redistribute wealth in the community and to equalize incomes. At the same time, it makes it difficult to save money. A man with a good income faces the dilemma of either remaining effectively poor through constant donations or losing status as a stingy person. He may save money secretly, but usually finds it more rewarding to spend it quickly.

There is one institution, the "pardner," through which money can be saved safely for short periods in preparation for large expenditures or emergencies. Two persons in Orange River, one the leader of the local Pocomania band, operate these informal savings clubs, which may be called the poor Jamaicans' banks. They are temporary associations, the life of each depending upon the number of members. Each participant pays a fixed amount weekly, usually five or ten shillings, to the banker for the duration of the club, and each week one member draws the entire bank. Thus, in a ten shilling pardner with ten members, each person gets a hundred shillings, or five pounds, when he draws--enough to buy a new pair of shoes, lease a good plot of land, or pay a doctor bill. Those who join pardners regularly always have an emergency fund. The bankers usually allow members to draw when they most need the money. Each recipient gives the banker a few shillings for his services in running the club.

The poorer villagers have barely enough money to meet daily expenses and cannot invest in pardners. Many remain always in debt to the shopkeepers, settling their accounts on payday only to begin charging again the next morning. They try to pay their accounts regularly, for the shopkeepers set limits on the amounts they can borrow. These credit ratings vary with the customer's income and reputation for honesty. Women normally have charge of household expenditures. The men turn most of their money over to their wives or mothers, who spend it largely on food, making extremely small purchases to cover immediate needs at the local shop. To buy more is to invite begging or infestation by insects. Larger purchases are made at the market and stores of Richmond or Highgate on Saturdays.

Among the depressed and ordinary classes each member of the family who earns money contributes to the household fund. Men support their wives and children, and often other relatives as well. Individuals reserve part of their incomes for personal use, however, and young, unmarried men probably spend most of their money on themselves. Men tend to spend this personal money on rum, while women favor clothing and ornaments. Younger people attend as many dances and movies as possible. Almost everyone buys occasional cigarettes and loses a little money on "draw 'pon," the Jamaican equivalent of the numbers racket. Although most individuals take their responsibilities to their families seriously, frequent disputes arise over personal allocations of funds, particularly in depressed-class households. The most salient cases of this sort occur when men fail to provide sufficient support for their "outside" children--children of women with whom they do not live. Such failure is sometimes the result of poverty, but often indicates simply an unwillingness to pay. The mothers frequently take these matters to law court. Such disputes indicate another aspect of Orange River culture in which problems constantly arise--the field of social organization.

Family, Household, and Kin

The household, composed of the persons who live in one house or room and eat their meals together, constitutes a basic unit of Orange River society. As indicated above, it is a major unit of economic consumption and often of production. The child grows up within the context of the household and from its members acquires the beliefs, attitudes, and behavior tendencies that condition much of his later life. Characteristics of households within the village vary considerably with social class.

In general, the comfortable-class household is similar in composition to the American type, consisting of husband, wife, and children, and based on neolocal residence. Strong social pressures promote Christian marriages, and few comfortable-class persons enter into common-law unions. A high value on the sanctity of church marriage keeps families relatively stable. Parents urge their children to pick comfortable-class mates, putting particularly severe pressure upon girls, who leave the protection of the parental household when they marry. The acute status anxiety indicated by these patterns is also evident in educational and inheritance practices. Dreading the decline of family fortunes, parents prefer to keep their land intact by leaving it all to one child. To avoid dividing it they exert great effort to assure their daughters of good marriages and their sons of lucrative professions or positions. To these ends they give their children all available opportunities for secondary and higher education, preferably in Kingston or England where useful social contacts can be made. The parents can then leave the land to a single child and be confident that the others can achieve success on their own. Comfortable-class Indians often chose the heir early, allowing him to marry and bring his wife to their household in the patrilocal pattern. These practices tend to weaken the ties of kinship in the comfortable class, for they foster economic individualism and separation of family members. Extra-familial kinship bonds, particularly, have little functional importance.

Depressed-class patterns are quite different. Here only about fifty per cent of the households center in married couples, and many of these include various relatives, both adult and minor, of one or the other spouse. The remaining households consist of unmarried women with children of their own or of relatives: three generational families often lacking male spouses at either or both adult levels; single men with aged or disabled kinfolk; and single persons, usually landless men or elderly widows. Analysis of these households reveals several significant patterns. First, depressed-class families foster strong mother-child bonds and correspondingly weak father-child ties. Whereas all depressed-class households containing children included mothers or mother substitutes, only about thirty per cent included fathers and another thirty per cent father substitutes. About seventy per cent of the children lived in separation from their fathers, forty per cent of them in households containing no men at all. The fact that the father even when present takes little part in the rearing of children increases the significance of these figures. The stronger bond with the mother carries over into later life as well, when both men and women tend to admit maternal relatives into the household more readily than paternal ones.[11]

The father's role centers more on financial obligations than on personal interaction. Whether the child results from a chance interlude, a protracted romance, or a marriage, the father is expected to provide money for its support. Some men tend to avoid such payment, particularly for outside children, but few fail to recognize and give their surname to their offspring. Many feel deeply responsible for the welfare of even outside children. All this indicates a marked instability of the husband-wife relationship. Although a high percentage of persons live in marital unions at any given time, many marriages are short-lived and over a period of years the picture of village unions may change radically in detail. During the writer's three month visit, for example, at least five marriages were dissolved and four more initiated. Such fluidity has pronounced effects upon household composition. The total situation can best be understood, perhaps, by viewing the changes that occur over time.[12]

Although they apply the term only to church unions, Jamaicans recognize three types of marriage. The first, "friending," involves economic obligations and sexual relations but not co-residence, and occurs mainly among young people. A youth who cannot fully support a wife may establish such a relationship with a girl who lives with her parents by "asking her mother for her." With the latter's consent and sometimes active cooperation, the two then arrange regular sexual meetings. The man gives a few shillings each week to the girl, who uses part of it to accumulate the articles she will need to establish a separate household. Theoretically, the man tries to acquire land or a job to support his future wife. Many such relationships break up before this goal is reached, and a person often has a series of "friends" before entering into a common-law, or "sweetheart" marriage.

Sweetheart marriage involves the establishment of a separate household and marked changes in the lives of both spouses. Men rarely contract such unions until their late 20's, girls somewhat earlier. "Friending" may or not not precede the marriage, but the partners usually have extensive sexual contact before making such a serious decision. The man should provide the house, but may move in with his wife if she has land. In the latter case she may keep her children by other men; otherwise her husband usually forbids it and she must leave them with relatives. The woman remains economically dependent upon her husband during the early years of marriage, particularly if she has young children to care for. In later years she becomes more independent. She may inherit land, and receives money from her children when they go to work. With this independence comes more authority in the household, which she may even come to dominate (cf. R. T. Smith, 1956: 112-4). However, as her independence increases so does the tendency for relatives to seek help from her. Sisters may give her their children to keep, and older relatives like widowed mother or aunts may come to live with her. Other accretions come from her husband's family and from adolescent daughters who begin to have babies.

Sweetheart marriages vary greatly in their stability. Some last permanently, but most persons contract at least two or three during their adult lives. Not so "real," or Christian marriages, the third type of union. Although Christian and common-law marriages have almost identical structural features, Jamaicans carefully distinguish between the two and never refer to "sweethearts" as married. They feel that church unions involve contracts with God, and they condone no divorce from them. Even separations are rare. This attitude, as well as the great expense of the Christian wedding with its elaborate reception and feast, contributes to the very low frequency of church unions among depressed-class people. The poor hold Christian marriage in high value as an ultimate goal, yet avoid it for fear of restricting their freedom. Despite their lack of security and effective freedom under common-law unions, women feel this attitude almost as strongly as men. One woman who had been living with the same man for fifteen years told the writer that she preferred sweetheart marriage because she did not want to tie herself down. She said she "might want to make a change some day." Most Christian marriages take place only after years of common-law union. The writer witnessed one wedding during the field trip, that of a middle-aged couple who had been sweethearts for twenty years. Established churches exert strong pressures toward Christian marriage, however, and some younger church members do enter such unions.

Christian marriage offers the wife slightly greater economic security than common-law union, as she can at least theoretically sue her husband for support if he leaves her. Both types promote the same kind of household development. In either case the woman usually outlives her husband. She may live on alone or with a son or daughter, but more often inherits her spouse's land and becomes the head of a matriarchal household. Her son may work her land, or a daughter may bring in a husband for this task. Sometimes she remains alone with her daughters and their children, forming the "grandmother family" discussed by Henriques (1953: 105-13). As her children marry and leave they begin the cycle of household development anew. Thus, at a given time the household represents only a stage in a continually shifting pattern of marital and consanguineal relationships. That between mother and child dominates the others both in stability and in importance, while the father-child relationship tends to be vague and transient, giving rise to economic and psychological problems.

The foregoing discussion gives some indication of the role of kinship in the depressed class. There are no corporate kin groups, but a person's "family," or kindred, composed of close maternal and paternal relatives, usually has a great deal of importance for him. He looks to his kinsmen for financial aid and for help in major jobs such as clearing fields and building houses. They contribute to his support when he becomes old or sick, and may provide him with food and shelter at any time. Groups of relatives often live in clusters of homes on adjoining plots, a pattern which stems in part from inheritance practices. Also, landless persons can often beg or borrow land from kinsmen and build their homes near them, contributing further to this tendency of localized kin groups. As might be expected, the older settlers, particularly the residents of Bongo Town, tend to have closer and more localized kinship ties than the newcomers, who have left their kindred to come to the land settlement. Influenced by older relatives, the Bongo Towners tend to be conservative and traditional. They have little choice, for they are economically dependent on their kinsmen. Family roots go back several generations in the neighborhood, and repeated sub-division of land has left them poor and unable to break away.

Ordinary-class household and kinship patterns are more similar to those of the depressed than the comfortable class, although they vary between the two extremes. Their marriages are more often Christian and generally more stable than depressed-class unions, facts which may be related to their greater economic security and fuller acceptance of Western social values. Accordingly, their households more often consist of or center in nuclear families, partly because women whose husbands leave them tend to become poverty-stricken and sink to depressed-class status. Ordinary-class people have generally weaker kinship bonds than the poor, since they are self-supporting and have less need for reciprocal economic aid. Residents of Hopewell Pen have particularly weak ties with their kinsmen, who live far away. This leaves a gap in their social lives, for the kindred provides contexts for visiting and other forms of social interactions. It also leaves them unprotected against economic disasters. Being more influenced by Western ideas than the isolated depressed classes, many seek these functions, and some find them, in Western types of community activities and in formal associations.

Voluntary Groups and Social Leaders

A number of voluntary organizations of various types usually operate in Orange River. They exhibit in common certain features that throw light on values, attitudes, and interaction among the different classes of villagers. The economic associations include the local branch of the All Island Banana Growers' Association (AIBGA), a chapter of the Jamaica Agricultural Society (JAS), and a Settlers' Association for land settlement allottees. All draw members, mostly ordinary-class persons, from surrounding areas as well as from within the village. Only the first has functioned continuously since its inception, a fact which reflects the importance of the banana industry in Orange River. The growers recognize the value of the AIBGA for their prosperity and support it in the hope of future gains. Any person who grows fifty banana trees may join, and by doing so receives crop insurance, discounts on supplies, and other benefits. These functions have little effect upon particicipation in the local branch, which operates mainly as an agency for the dissemination of information and as a sounding board for complaints. Of more than forty registered members, only eight attend meetings regularly. Significantly, all eight reside in Hopewell Pen.

The JAS chapter receives even less support, and survives largely by holding joint meetings with the AIBGA. It has died out several times in the past, to be revived each time by some organizer who managed to elicit interest. At present it has about twenty members, of whom six, all from Hopewell Pen, reside in the village. Similar cycles have characterized the Settlers' Association and the two educational clubs, the 4H and the Parent-Teachers' Association. All three draw their members mainly from among the newcomers, and all were defunct at the time of the study.

The villagers are politically conscious, most of them favoring the People's National Party. Much of this support comes from the old settlers, largely because a former resident and member of a large Orange River kin group holds a high office in the parish government. The local PNP club has cycles also. Responding to the coming elections, it flourished during the field study, meeting regularly and holding dances and rallies. It boasted more than eighty members but only about twenty were active, and when the government raised the ceiling price on salt cod it began to disintegrate. Similar difficulties harass the local Cricket Club, a theoretically permanent association which dies each winter. Actually it functions only during games, for the members never practice. But for the headmaster of the local school, an ardent enthusiast who organizes games with other villages, the club would probably collapse entirely. Several other recreational clubs in the village were defunct during the writer's visit.

Several factors influence these repeated failures. First, the villagers have little interest in group activities that offer no immediate personal rewards. They attend meetings when economic benefits seem likely to result, when visiting speakers present new ideas, or when special events such as dances offer changes from every-day routine, but seldom otherwise. Regular meetings are organized on the Western plan and provide for little audience participation, a feature not enjoyed by most Jamaicans. Secondly, few villagers have the abilities necessary for official positions in these associations or for effective leadership over their ordinary-class members. Most of those who do are unwilling to assume the responsibilities and duties necessary to keep such organizations in operation. Although they like the prestige of these offices and enjoy presiding at meetings, the novelty of taking minutes, handling correspondence, and arranging meetings quickly wears off, and the ensuing neglect presages the decline of the club.[13]

The problem of leadership would be less acute except for a third factor, the occurrence of informal cliques which permeate the clubs and compete with them, serving many of the functions that the latter attempt. These cliques have divergent interests and goals, which promote factionalism within the association. Their leaders need little excuse to start disputes and feuds or to secede with their followers.[14] Such factionalism is directly responsible for the demise of several village clubs, and is also a major factor in the constant bifurcation of religious groups. An understanding of its operation requires a knowledge of the determinants of authority and the character of leadership within the community.

Orange River has no formal community organization--no person or group that exercises general authority over the villagers. However, informal leaders, each with influence over smaller groups, collectively wield a good deal of control. As Smith has recently suggested, community structure may be viewed in terms of the overlapping spheres of influence of such persons (M. G. Smith, 1956a: 306-9). Among the most important in Orange River are the school headmaster, the four shopkeepers, some club officers, and three religious leaders. The headmaster, a well educated man of comfortable-class birth, knows some law and serves as an advisor to villagers with various kinds of problems. He also hires domestic help and local labor for odd jobs connected with the school, and has taken office in several clubs. The shopkeepers exert influence through extension of credit and control of facilities for marketing cacao, pimento, and annatto. They also control certain job opportunities, one being a road contractor, another a house builder, and all hiring workers for their fields. The poorer people make every effort to remain in their good graces, running errands and doing favors for them in order to receive or retain these benefits.

Most officers of functioning associations have large land holdings or high-status occupations, thus meeting the first requisite for leadership. They usually hire at least occasional workers. Their election to office reflects their popularity and often increases their prestige. Religious leaders draw their followings mainly from their sects or cults. They extend their authority well beyond the sphere of religion, however, and often influence other persons as well. Partly through their religious activities they have acquired sufficient land and wealth to insure continued followings, even should they retire from active religious specialization.

Other, lower status persons exercise authority over smaller groups, forming hierarchies of leadership within the village. All exhibit certain common behavior traits while exercising these roles. The Jamaican leader acts in a strictly supervisory capacity. He must always be able to convince others that he knows the best way of performing a task and must direct the job, but he must never actually work except at specialized tasks that he alone can manage. The leader who forgets and helps the others loses their respect and endangers his status. The Pocomania chief is perhaps the best example of Jamaican leadership in the village. He sits around all day doing nothing, but always has some task for any visitor. He usually creates the impression of doing the follower a favor by accepting his help. Like other leaders, he reciprocates by giving food, rum, and money to his followers occasionally, and now and then hiring them for odd jobs.

Local leaders sometimes support one another, thus banding their followers together into large blocs. More often they oppose each other, and minor leaders often break off to form their own cliques. Both leaders and followers tend to raise their own statuses and those of their cliques by accusing rivals of theft, immorality, treachery, and so forth. Any misfortune suffered by the leader or a member of a clique is immediately blamed on the dastardly deeds of enemies. This promotes social control within the group, for the person who commits an anti-social act brings disgrace upon his leader and his clique as well as himself and automatically becomes an outsider. The village thus exhibits what might be called a negative organization, based on competition, distrust, and opposition among the various groups (cf. Cohen, 1954).

This informal leadership, growing out of the preferences and recurrent needs of the lower classes, often works against formal authority and positive controls which impinge on the community from the outside--from island and parochial governments and their agencies. Depressed-class villagers resent these outside controls, although lately they have begun to see advantages in them. It is in the field of law that the villagers retain their resentments most fully. They prefer to deal with local delinquents themselves, and call the police only when major crimes or outsiders are involved. The district constable wisely recognizes their attitudes and visits the village only when called.

The people live in constant fear of theft, but like sorcery this problem exists more in their minds than in reality. Praedial larceny (theft of crops from the fields) and burglary occasionally occur but rarely reach significant proportions. Postulating theft is a major techniques of explaining personal failures and misfortunes, and also provides a means for attacking enemies. If all such accusations were true, most of the movable property in the village would have to change hands at least once every year.[15] The most prevalent crime is fighting, which seldom goes beyond the verbal stage but occasionally involves fists or cutlasses. Recourse to legal action occurs more often after fights than in any other situations. Injured persons go in fits of rage to Richmond to file suit, often disregarding the fact that they too were armed and may be punished. Even verbal arguments may make individuals angry enough to formally accuse their opponents of theft, regardless of evidence. Women who sue for support of their children often file their complaints directly after arguments with the men concerned. Thus, recourse to law becomes a form of revenge, and as such conforms to local patterns of informal social control.

In contrast, some illegal practices are never reported to the police. The villagers shield gamblers and ganja (marihuana) smokers from the law, for example, althoug many regard such acts as immoral. Obeah, too, they consider extra-legal, and never inform on its specialists. Fear of the Obeah man may be a factor here but is not, as is commonly supposed, the predominant one. The villagers view him as a necessity--indeed as an actual benefactor who does far more good than harm. To turn him in is to deprive oneself not only of his services but also those of other Obeah man, for no one trusts an informer. Furthermore, he can always use his craft to win acquittal and return to wreak vengeance. It is far better to combat a sorcerer by hiring a more powerful Obeah man--to take magical rather than legal retaliation. Even comfortable-class persons share such anti-government attitudes or at least passively accept their results.

This, then, is the social framework within which the Orange River individual organizes his behavior and his relations with others. As he proceeds through the life cycle his position within it changes, always presenting him with new problems and situations and requiring him to make new adjustments to the people around him. We turn now to some of the major phases in this process as it applies to persons of different classes.

The Life of the Individual

Numerous dangers threaten the depressed-class mother and child during pregnancy and birth. To avoid them the expectant mother shuns heavy labor during the last months of her pregnancy, and may observe food and other restrictions as well. Some women visit the maternity clinic in Highgate for prenatal care, but most simply receive the periodic visits of a registered district nurse who also attends deliveries. Until recently "Nanas," or bush nurses, acted as midwives, and conservative women still prefer them to the nurse. The Nana, they claim, not only did a more careful technical job and charged less, but also took proper precautions against evil spirits. Also, she remained in attendance for nine days, while the nurse cannot. One informant said that the nurse "only come and cut the cord and charge two guineas, then she gone." Nanas are now outlawed, however, and cannot practice.

A woman normally gives birth in her own house, assisted by her mother and perhaps other kinswomen. Her husband may help out in emergencies. She lies on the bed or floor, often drinking thyme-leaf tea before delivery. Nanas used to massage her belly and smear her vagina with castor oil to assist the birth, but nurses frown on such practices. After delivery mother and child are bathed in warm water containing rum and silver money, the cord is cut, and the baby's navel sprinkled with powdered nutmeg and bandaged. The mother may then be fed coffee and the baby mint tea. In difficult births the Nana would give the mother medicinal bush tea and would attempt to draw the baby from the womb. Should an evil spirit be the cause of the trouble an Obeah man would be called in to help.

The first nine days are particularly dangerous, for evil duppies may try to steal the infant's soul or family ghosts may want to "play" with it. To avert this the mother dresses the baby in red or ties a red string around its wrist. She may also keep an open Bible near its head and a pair of open scissors nearby to "cut away the destruction." Both mother and child remain for nine days in the room, which is sealed up to prevent the entrance of spirits.

Even sophisticated mothers follow many of these customs, they say "to prevent colds." All mothers feed their infants herbal teas to remedy or prevent maladies conceived to have physical causes.[16]

On the ninth day the mother brings the infant out and presents it to friends and relatives. Christening takes place at the church or by a local religious leader in the yard. Church ministers hesitate to christen "illegitimate" children, and when they do usually lecture the mothers on morality. This attitude is changing, but still has effects upon comfortable-class girls, who try to avoid having children before marriage. Some informants reported that most abortions and infanticides occur among high status and upward mobile girls who try to circumvent these values in their quests for good marriages. Among the lower classes most children are born to common-law wives and single women. The father usually recognizes his paternity, and if he refuses the villagers assign the child to a likely candidate (cf. R. T. Smith, 1956: 132-3). Nevertheless, the baby born to a single woman faces a very different future than one reared in his father's household, a fact that will become increasingly clear below.

Mothers nurse their infants whenever they cry, often supplementing the breast with bottle feedings, tea, and thin porridge. Weaning is effected abruptly by rubbing lime juice or bitter herbs on the nipples. It usually occurs at nine or twelve months, but some mothers wait longer in the belief that continued nursing prevents conception. The mother often allows--even encourages--her child to fondle her breasts long after weaning, particularly when it is ill. For the first few months she carries it constantly. Even after weaning she picks it up whenever it cries, holds it when it is sick, and carries it with her whenever she leaves her yard. She does not encourage walking or talking, or make conscious efforts at toilet training, until the child passes the infancy stage.

The infant reaches childhood when he learns to talk and thus becomes "sensible." Boys receive their first haircuts only after attaining this ability, lest their verbal and mental development be retarded. Believing that no attempt to socialize a pre-sensible child could succeed, mothers commence training at this point, gradually increasing its severity. Toilet training proceeds easily and involves no punishment until the child reaches the age of four or five. During this period boys go about dressed only in shirts. Girls must wear dresses and "baggies," or cotton panties, and receive training in "shame" as well as in cleanliness. This training is severe, and girls of five and six exercise great care to appear modest at all times. Mothers drill their children in obedience, respectfulness, honesty, and politeness, mainly by use of threats. They occasionally slap small children and switch larger ones, but administer severe beatings only in anger. Such punishment occurs often enough to make the usual threat, that of a "flogging," effective. Other threats concern magical reprisals and supernatural retributions. For example, mothers call attention to odd night noises, saying that they are made by ghosts or other demons who come to punish rude or disobedient children.

Although the role of socializer falls almost entirely upon women, the presence or absence of the father becomes important during this period. An unmarried girl usually leaves her child largely in the care of her mother or some other close relative. The child thus adopted has little contact with men and receives far less of the good-natured, casual affection shown other children by their fathers. Also, the grandmother exposes it to the beliefs and attitudes of an older generation, and these ideas, becoming obsolete under conditions of culture change, may impose drawbacks upon the child as it grows older. The mother-substitute normally welcomes the child, but it increases her economic burden and she may make it work harder to help pay for its upkeep. It sometimes has a quasi-servant status in the household, and often gets shabbier clothing, less food, and more punishment.[17]

Depressed-class girls must do housework and laundry while still quite young and when older must mind smaller children. Their mothers demand strict obedience and mete out swift punishment for shirking. Boys receive more lenient treatment. They have no duties, and even when asked to run errands may often refuse without fear of retribution. Both sexes live in a very restricted world until the age of seven. They have few toys and must amuse themselves with discarded odds and ends.[18] Playing consists chiefly of imitating adult work activities. Children are normally confined to their own yards and venture out only when accompanied by adults. They may not even play with their neighbors, who might corrupt them. Thus, entering school becomes a major event in their lives.

School begins at the age of seven and includes practical subjects like agriculture and sewing as well as the three R's. To the child it means much more than mere formal education, however, for it constitutes a partial escape from the yard, an influx of ideas from a peer group as well as from teachers, and a general expansion of horizons. For girls, who must go home directly after school lest they be seduced by older boys, this new-found freedom is less extensive than for their brothers. Poorer children, too, receive less benefit. Since they become economic assets at this age, their parents keep them home much of the time and withdraw them entirely after a few years. Also, most parents are sensitive about the appearance their children make at school and keep them home if their clothes are soiled or torn. The children thus restricted receive more of the traditional view than others. Many feel frustrated, seeing promising goals become unattainable. Again, adopted children meet these drawbacks oftener than others.

From about the age of ten boys go with their fathers to the fields to learn farming. Since they usually enjoy it and need no urging, fathers never become disciplinarians. Older boys may be given plots of land and thus achieve partial independence while still adolescent. Poorer boys and adopted sons get less of this training and seldom receive land at this time. Some never inherit and must leave the village when still young to find work. Girls remain dependent and restricted longer. Their mothers try to keep them occupied with household tasks and small children and do their best to keep them home, particularly at night, but usually fail miserably in their purpose of preventing the girls' sexual contacts and subsequent pregnancies.

Most adolescents begin sexual experimentation by the age of ten or so. From casual liasons and brief affairs they gradually establish more lasting relationships. Almost every young person has a succession of such affairs, few of them permanent in purpose. Since the boy must give the girl presents in exchange for her favors, the poorer youths are least often successful in love. Many such affairs terminate in arguments over the boys' failure to provide satisfactory gifts. Eventually, however, most young people find suitable partners and set up new households.

Unmarked by rite or ceremony, the transition to adulthood proceeds in gradual stages. Men attain this goal when they achieve economic independence and the ability to support families. Some become adults in their early 20's, but others remain dependent upon their elders for years, receiving land only when the latter die. The girl's first sign of approaching adulthood is the onset of menstruation, often a complete surprise. A pregnancy that may cause her to leave school often follows. Motherhood only increases her dependence upon her mother, however, and adulthood comes only with marriage. Even then she shifts this dependence to her husband. Her daily life changes little except sexually. The husband may continue his casual affairs so long as he provides adequately for his family, but he expects his wife to remain faithful. His economic hold over her usually insures that she does.

Adult life in Orange River changes little during the year. Many crops are seasonal but they mature at different times, making both planting and harvesting year-round activities. The rainy season from September to January marks a dimunition of agricultural work, and February offers various construction jobs; otherwise one season is much like the next. Men have more varied daily lives than women. Most phases of peasant farming require relatively little daily labor, and the man who is not preparing new fields finds time for various activities. Women lead more routine lives in their homes and have less leisure time. Their best day is Saturday, when they go to market for their weekly supplies or visit the city to sell produce.

Sundays and evenings are reserved for recreation. Sunday activities include visiting, resting, and for a minority of villagers, church. Sects and cults hold meetings also on Sunday nights and sometimes other nights as well. Most villagers normally retire early, but an amazing amount of after dark activity occurs. Religious and funeral ceremonies, association meetings, parties, gambling sessions and domino games, movies and dances all take place at night, usually on Fridays and Saturdays. Few weeks pass without several social functions. The younger set favors dances and movies, while older people prefer traditional pastimes such as dominoes, visiting, and telling stories about "Anancy" the spider--the Jamaican Brer Rabbit.

With senescence comes another period of dependence, this time involving fewer duties and affecting men more than women. Men seldom outlive their wives, but those who do must seek refuge with a younger relative, for they need women to wash their clothes and cook their food. Most men work as long as they can, but spend their old age with their grandchildren. Not many reach this stage, however, and few children can be "spoiled" by them. Women, being more self-sufficient in the home, retain their independence longer. Several elderly Orange River widows maintain themselves and even raise children without help. Others, although old and weak, still exert authority and command respect in larger households.

Sickness, Curing, and Death

Free from many of the maladies that plague the lowlands, the St. Mary mountains have reputations for health. Orange River offers little evidence to the contrary. The district fosters no endemic diseases and compared to other areas of Jamaica has a very low illness rate. When speaking in general terms the villagers support this contention, but in more specific contexts they spend hours talking about their physical troubles. They take great interest in sickness and worry constantly about it. Taking their statements literally, one would believe them to be the sickliest people in the world. They offer illness as a standard excuse for everything from missing appointments to poverty and low social status. Asking a villager about any failing almost automatically invites a reply like "Me sick, man, me sick fe true! Me da fever a belly." While many such statements undoubtedly indicate psychosomatic symptoms or simple procrastination, the people believe health to be a serious problem, and as a result it becomes one.

The villagers often blame their maladies, both real and imaginary, upon actual or assumed enemies, a tendency which may be seen as part of the more general inclination to project one's misfortunes upon others. They never make direct accusations and consequently never invite evidence that their suspicions have no factual basis. Time and again informants claimed that their worst enemies were people who pretended friendliness while secretly having sorcery worked against them (cf. Cohen, 1955: 275, 288-92).

Along with this great interest in sickness goes a highly elaborated complex of beliefs and practices regarding its prevention, diagnosis, and cure. Like other traditional customs, these patterns are most prevalent among the lower classes. Many conservative villagers retain the old prejudices against Europeans and avoid Western-trained doctors except in cases of serious accident and stubborn maladies that resist folk curing methods. They have only reluctantly accepted the public health authority and district nurses, and still prefer to seek medical aid from Obeah men and bush doctors. Only a brief sketch of secular healing customs appears here; religious aspects of the subject will receive attention in later chapters.

Herbal or "bush" remedies pervade the entire system of Jamaican folk medicine, cutting across all other categories. Few specialists limit their practices to bush curing, but nearly all of them include it in their repertoires. Most laymen also use herbal remedies for common minor ailments. The familiar contention that every Jamaican plant has some medicinal use is not far wrong. Literally hundreds of grasses, roots, and leaves have alleged curative properties. although few persons claim to know many of them. Popular drugs, patent medicines, and exotic oils have recently entered this native materia medica as well. Ideas about preparation and application vary considerably. The more common techniques include brewing teas, giving herbal baths, and applying leaves and plasters to both open sores and internal pains. Although many practitioners use herbs in conjunction with magico-religious techniques, often in ways that cannot have organic effects, there is no doubt that some bush remedies do serve their purposes.[19] Still, few Jamaicans live out their allotted threescore and ten years.

When death occurs the family notifies all close relatives. Some usually miss the burial, which by law must take place within twenty-four hours. Friends and relatives contribute cash, food, mortuary materials, and labor to the funeral. Some wash and dress the corpse, while others construct the coffin, dig the grave, build an arbor or "booth" in the yard for the rites, prepare food, and sing hymns. After a Christian funeral service led by a local religious leader they inter the deceased in his back yard while primary relatives remain in the house. A "set-up," or wake is held that night in the booth. It lasts all night, the participants singing hymns, reading the scriptures, praying, and playing cards or dominoes. Everyone is welcome, and refreshments are served at midnight and again at daybreak when the ritual ends. Close relatives may remain to help the survivors for several days or even weeks. Sometimes, but not often, they practice the old custom of sitting up every night for a week to "keep the dead company." The family holds a "nine-night" ceremony somewhat later, on the ninth night if finances permit but more often after two or three months. Similar to the set-up but more elaborate, this rite involves games, stories, prayers, hymns, Bible reading, rum drinking, and sometimes dancing. The public may again attend, and refreshments, this time in greater quantity, are served.

The more elaborate funeral rites of former years had much greater supernatural significance than those of today. They involved rituals such as that of shadow catching, which prevented the ghost from troubling his survivors and sent him, satisfied with his new status, to the land of the dead. The wake, nine-night, and nightly ceremonies between them were filled with various activities in which the duppy allegedly participated.[20] Traditional families still take precautions against the ghost, but most funeral services today are simply memorial rites. Nevertheless, they involve considerable expense, which comes at a most inopportune time.

Death usually necessitates reorganization of the household to meet the continuing needs of survivors. Among the depressed class it has effects upon the larger kin group as well. The form and extent of readjustment depend upon such factors as the sex and age of the deceased, his status in the family, and the size and composition of the household.

The death of a small child means relatively little disruption and expense. Babies are buried by their immediate families with only minor rites. Larger children may merit modest set-ups, but only adults require major ceremonies involving extensive participation and heavy expenses. Aged persons depart the world with full honors, but leave behind few problems of adjustment.

The death of a productive adult may have serious consequences, for the survivors must find new means of support. Bereaved husbands, for example, must find female relatives to do their cooking and laundry and to care for their children. Widows, unless they inherit land, must move in with relatives or leave their children with kinsmen and go to work. Neither widower nor widow may remarry for at least several months. Death, then, often imposes added economic burdens on other households, affecting the structure of the kin group and demonstrating the importance of obligations and duties of kinsmen. As poverty-stricken members of a bilateral society without extended families or corporate kin groups, lower class Jamaicans had to adopt some method of this sort to meet such recurrent emergencies.

Yet, these problems are not unique to death. The divorced or separated person faces situations quite similar to those of the widow or widower. Indeed, if he inherits land the latter may be better off than the former. Both structurally and economically, death in a society with marriage as unstable as that in Jamaica becomes merely a slightly variant instance of an almost daily event. Patterns developed to relieve the difficulties arising from separation have been applied to bereavement, and the social importance of death has thus decreased. This may be a significant factor in the decline of the elaborate funerary rites and associated beliefs of earlier generations. Beliefs and ceremonies involving ghosts still occur, but they have lost their association with the family. While the villagers believe in an afterlife and see death as a status change, they usually admit that with regard to family life the deceased becomes but a memory.

Summary and Transition

Modern Western and native Jamaican influences vary in the extent to which they influence different people in Orange River. The comfortable class feels the former most strongly, while the depressed class tends to emphasize the latter. The two traditions meet with more nearly equal force among the ordinary class. These variations promote differences in the kinds of problems that confront the members of different classes and in the ideas and methods which they utilize in attempting to solve them.

The more extensively acculturated comfortable class includes economically secure peasants, tradesmen, white collar workers and the like. They stress Christian marriage, have stable nuclear families, and minimize kinship ties. Although less localized than the other classes, they remain from choice socially isolated from them except in economic and authority situations. Their children especially are kept from close contact with depressed-class people. This self-enforced isolation indicates great concern over social status, as does their emphasis on education and good marriages. Indeed, status anxieties seem to lie at the roots of their major problems.

Socially and spatially cut off from acculturative influences, depressed-class people tend to reject Western methods of solving problems. They are quite poor, owning little or no land, and derive their meager incomes mainly through wage labor. Generally unstable family and marriage patterns contribute to their economic anxieties and promote great personal insecurity among them. Extensive adoption, strong kinship bonds, and dependency upon high-status authority figures serve to temper these problems. Such patterns as inter-clique rivalries and the projection of blame on sorcerers provide means for attacking these troubles but usually compound the difficulties. The individual's status history within the family influences the extent to which these problems affect him and the symptomatic form they take.

Ordinary-class people, both newcomers and old settlers, have larger incomes, stabler families, and more progressive tendencies than their low-status neighbors and exhibit less economic and personal insecurity. They rely less on kinsmen and look to formal, Western-type organizations for economic insurance and social life. Yet, they cling to many traditional attitudes and beliefs which imperil these ventures. Caught between the two traditions, they often do not know which way to turn. To some extent they share depressed-class concerns over money, health, and leadership, and comfortable-class problems of maintaining social and economic status.

These social class differences promote variations in both the informal and institutionalized aspects of religion. People with dissimilar problems not only join different religious groups to solve them but also approach them with entirely different attitudes and orientations. We turn now to an analysis of the various religious complexes through which the people of Orange River attempt to find happiness and security.

Chapter 6

RELIGION IN ORANGE RIVER

Churches, Sects, and Cults

The religious situation in Orange River epitomizes the larger Jamaican picture and reflects the main lines of religious historical development on the island. The village contains various religious groups which draw to different extents upon the native Jamaican and modern Western traditions and together cover almost the entire contemporary Afro-Christian continuum. These groups fall into three general types--established sects, or churches; independent sects; and cults. Each type reflects the values and attitudes of the members of a different social class and functions in terms of their characteristic problems.[1]

Churches constitute branch stations of international religious bodies with hierarchical authority systems and formally trained officers. Most of them have administrative centers in Great Britain and are of long standing in Jamaica, but some have come recently from America. The local leaders conform closely to the theological, ritual, and organizational forms specified by higher authorities. Jamaican churches are associated primarily with the upper classes, whose religious preferences and values, like their other cultural patterns, derive largely from the norms of modern Western civilization. Several churches have significance for residents of Orange River, but only the Presbyterian body has a local station at present.

Independent sects arise and function under untrained local leaders who split off from larger religious organizations--often from American churches that have recently entered Jamaica. Both the rural countryside and the cities abound with them. Some of them affiliate loosely with these parent bodies and follow their general teachings, but all remain economically and structurally independent and derive some of their ideological and ritual elements from the native Jamaican tradition. Most of their members come from the ordinary socio-economic class. Two such groups, a Pentecostal sect and a Church of God, operate in Orange River, the former depending mostly upon newcomers and the latter appealing more to old settlers.

Cults develop locally under nonsectarian leaders and have origins in such historical movements as Myalism, Native Baptism, and Bedwardism. They emphasize the worship of non-Christian or semi-Christian spirits and evolve unique systems of belief, ritual, and organization based largely upon the native Jamaican tradition. Their members come almost exclusively from the lower classes and usually from the more depressed and conservative sections of the population. Three cults affect the people of Orange River. The most nearly Christian and the most deviant of them, Zion Revival and Convince respectively, receive attention here, while the middle group, Pocomania, awaits later, more detailed consideration.

In treating these subjects, the present chapter draws together several themes presented in previous sections. It deals primarily with the institutional aspects of religion but also notes organizational, ideological, and ritual principles that cut across class and denominational lines and apply generally in the village. Preserving the bias of preceding chapters, it devotes relatively little attention to the formal doctrines and rituals of orthodox Christian bodies, which differ only slightly from their British and American prototypes. The study remains focused on the beliefs, values, and behavior patterns characteristic of the villagers themselves and emphasizes the semi-Christian cults. Churches receive attention first.

Established Churches

The Presbyterian church building in The Top is the only substantial religious structure in the village. It originally belonged to the Wesleyan Methodists and doubled as a schoolhouse. The recent change to Presbyterian administration apparently had little effect. A few new members joined and some old ones dropped out, but most merely shifted their support to the new organization. The present officers function in much the same manner as their predecessors. The church is now one of five out-stations under the charge of a single minister, an upper-class Jamaican who took his 2
training in Britain and has his headquarters in Port Maria.

He comes to the village one Sunday each month to preach and give communion. Two elders, both non-residents, hold the other Sabbath services. Like the minister they are appointed by the Synod Council and belong to the upper or comfortable classes.

Believing that they spread the true religion indiscriminately, these Presbyterian officers want to recruit members from all segments of society. Yet, they refuse to adapt their policies to the problems and values of ordinary and depressed-class people and thus fail to win their support. The church operates in almost every particular in terms of the comfortable-class subculture and draws its members primarily from the highest echelon of village society. The minister and elders explicitly uphold the social values of modern Western culture and condemn such patterns as sweetheart marriage. They preach in the British dialect, which depressed-class people comprehend only with difficulty. The unbending formality of their solemn, decorous services, which stress quiet discourse and allow little audience participation, seems tedious and uninspiring to most villagers, although high status people appreciate it. Membership itself rests largely upon such intellectual feats as learning the catechism, which only the elite deem worthwhile. Conversion "by the spirit" has no place in Presbyterian religion, nor does the immersion ceremony which conservative Jamaicans value so highly.[3]

The Presbyterian officers, being upper-class outsiders, tend to elicit the same suspicions and hostilities shown by the common people to planters, magistrates, and other high status strangers. Their religious roles temper these attitudes to some extent, but these men make almost no effort to win the confidence of the poorer people or to learn about their problems. They spend little time in the village, seldom offer advice, perform no healing, and contribute no economic aid to their members. They hold no evening prayer meetings or youth assemblies, and schedule few recreational functions. In short, they offer almost none of the services that the villagers expect of leaders. Yet, they expect their members to contribute generously to the church and constantly exhort them to give more money.

The more prosperous villagers can make these contributions and have no need or desire for the various services. They care little about youth assemblies, for example, because their young people are away at school. But the poorer classes, beset by economic distress themselves, cannot meet the expectations of leaders who offer little or nothing in return. Consequently they refuse to support the Presbyterian church, although they give liberally to informal local leaders who offer them various compensations for their loyalty.[4] They perceive the church officers as outsiders who, like others of their class impose themselves on the village and exploit the poor.

The Presbyterian church thus functions as a sort of country club for the edification of the elite of the village and surrounding districts. The building itself reflects comfortable-class values on impressive architecture and indicates the denomination's prestige. The church also aids class mobility. Social climbers recognize its status and join it as a way of gaining entry into elite circles. Other villagers with social aspirations, who do not belong to the church and who cannot hope to rise themselves, send their children to the Presbyterian Sunday school. About twenty children usually attend and remain, obviously against their wishes, through church services. They often constitute the bulk of the congregation, for adult attendance reaches sizeable proportions only when the minister comes and seldom exceeds ten when the elders officiate. A few depressed-class persons, chiefly elderly widows, belong to the church, and some others who never attend services occasionally claim to be Presbyterians in order to impress outsiders.[5] Generally speaking, however, the poorer people look elsewhere for religious satisfaction. Some wealthier persons do likewise.

The Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Gospel Hall bodies maintain churches in Richmond and together draw a total of eleven villagers to their services. Eight of these persons, six of them Indians, belong to the comfortable class. All apparently find something in these churches that the Presbyterian religion does not provide. None of these bodies has the prestige of the Presbyterians, but all have higher status in the eyes of the villagers than any other local religious group.[6] Similar in organization to the Presbyterian church, they are less rigidly formal, encouraging audience participation and holding various recreational meetings. None encourages violent religious expression, but all emphasize conversion by the spirit of God, stress personal salvation, and perform baptism. Each has some unique ideological or ritual features which set it apart from other religious groups and upon which it justifies its separate existence. These features may influence membership. The Seventh Day Adventists, for example, stress Saturday services and attract several villagers who work a five day week on the government experimental farm. The fact that all these churches offer convenient compromises between rigid Presbyterian formalism and the violent emotionalism of sects and cults also seems significant. Yet, they function much like the Presbyterian body, giving opportunities for social interaction and status expression to economically secure but socially isolated villagers. Indeed, they attract mostly comfortable-class Indians, who form the most secluded group in the village.

The Church of England has branches at both Highgate and Richmond. Several socially conscious villagers claim to be members, but none attend services. This is particularly interesting in view of the fact that for many years an out-station of this church stood in Bongo Town. It apparently had few members, and no one bothered to rebuild it after a hurricane blew it down in the early 1940's. Like the Presbyterian body, the Church of England is highly formal, oriented toward the elite, and fails to perform baptism or provide material rewards to depressed-class members. It seems that no villagers perceive enough difference between the two to justify making the trip to Highgate or Richmond. The Roman Catholic church in Highgate also fails to interest the local people, as do other churches in these towns.

The Baptist church in Zion Hill, slightly easier to reach, fares better. About a dozen villagers are members and several more attend services intermittently. Outwardly similar to the Presbyterian body, this church exhibits certain characteristics that make it more popular with the ordinary and depressed classes. The minister serves three other out-stations and his main church in Port Maria, but manages to preach morning and evening services every second Sunday at Zion Hill. He also comes frequently to special meetings and to visit the members at their homes. A deacon presides on alternate Sundays and holds prayer and testimonial meetings on week nights.

Like the Presbyterian officers, the minister preaches in the British dialect and deplores violent emotion in religion. Nevertheless, he encourages cultists to join his church, hoping to win them over to his brand of Christianity. He has succeeded in making Baptists of several village cultists, but has failed to woo them away from Pocomania and Zion Revivalism. They have compartmentalized their religious responses, restricting their spiritualistic activities to cult ceremonies while achieving some measure of Christian orthodoxy and prestige at the Baptist church. All are elderly persons who firmly believe in their cults, but who have been affected by adverse criticism and have come to doubt the completeness of their Christianity and the true status of their salvation. By joining the Baptist church they reassure themselves that they are true Christians and are fulfilling their obligations to God.

Most other village Baptists apparently feel no need to make either of these religious responses. Elderly persons of the ordinary and depressed classes, they were formerly active in the church but no longer attend frequently. More than fifty Richmond and Zion Hill people do attend, however, and some of them find opportunities for emotional expression at services. Unknown to the pastor, the church is itself compartmentalized through the activities of the deacon. Sunday services under both the pastor and the deacon are quiet and decorous like those of other churches, but evening prayer meetings become quite emotional, often taking on revivalistic characters. Under the guidance of the deacon, a local leader who gets the spirit himself, the members become possessed by the Spirit of God, who induces them to shout and jerk, wave and stamp, and fervently testify to their salvation.

Participants see no incongruity between such behavior and their decorum at Sunday services, nor do they feel that they are deceiving the pastor. They simply consider it improper to get the spirit at Sunday services or in his presence. The true Spirit comes only to prayer meetings.[7] The pastor himself inadvertently reinforces this attitude by encouraging known cultists to join the church. Comfortable-class members simply ignore these activities and attend only on Sundays. For them the church functions much like the Presbyterian body in Orange River. Its prestige as a whole is affected but little by the deacon's separate spiritual compartment. With respect to prayer meetings the church approximates the character of an independent sect. Indeed, there is a distinct possibility that the deacon will eventually break off and form his own sect group, as many other such leaders have done.

The Jesus Only Sect

The Orange River Pentecostal group, officially termed the "Jesus' Name Church," goes by the popular nickname "Jesus Only." It had an abortive beginning in the village during the '30's, but the leader returned in 1952 after the opening of the land settlement and had better success. He built a mission in Hopewell Pen and within a year had gained seven new converts, all from a single household. This independent sect now boasts twenty-one members, of whom nine live along the sparsely settled Highgate road west of the village. Seven, including the leader and his family, live in Hopewell Pen, and the other five in the upper section of The Top. Except for two high-status Indians, one a backslider, they are all newcomers to the area. Most of them belong to the ordinary class, but seem to be socially isolated, somewhat deviant fringe members of the community. They readily admit their queerness, proudly proclaiming that only peculiar people can enter the Kingdom of Heaven. They doubt even the qualifications of other Pentecostal people. The local sect remains loosely affiliated with the larger organization, but deviates in some aspects of belief and ritual from the parent body and has almost no contact with other groups. The leader, Brother White, follows the general doctrine set forth in tracts obtained from Pentecostal bodies in Florida and Texas, but steadfastly retains his independence and finds errors both in these writings and in the teachings of other Pentecostal leaders in Jamaica.

A major point of doctrine which serves to distinguish the local group and promote its nickname lies in the explicit conviction that there is only one God, not a trinity. His name is Jesus, and such terms as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are only titles to be used in different contexts. Members maintain that all other religious groups fail to recognize this point and thus become enmeshed in other errors of belief and ritual. An example is baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the only true baptism is in the name of Jesus. This distinction may seem superficial to others, but the Jesus Only people assign it great importance, for correct baptism is essential to the salvation of the individual.

Every individual receives a portion of Adam's sin at birth and during his life commits additional sins, often inadvertently and unknowingly. To achieve salvation he must first confess and repent of his sins and then accept Jesus as the one true God who can forgive them. After long and earnest prayer his personal sins are forgiven and the Holy Ghost can possess his body to burn out the Adamic sin. After this baptism by fire he undergoes a water baptism, which symbolizes his entry into the body of the Church and his rebirth. He may inadvertently sin again from time to time, however, and must pray repeatedly for forgiveness. Post-conversion sins are discovered and removed by specific ritual mechanisms at sect meetings.

The Jesus Only sect meets twice on Sundays and at least three evenings during each week. All meetings proceed in much the same way, with Sunday services being distinguished mainly by longer sermons and larger audiences. Brother White usually delivers the sermon, but members also speak when they wish and by so doing gain status in the group. Converted members are expected to participate in meetings as often as possible. Participation involves comparatively violent and bizarre physical behavior which is conceptualized as the activation of the Holy Ghost who dwells within the body. Throughout the meetings members involuntarily jerk and twitch, shout and cry, whirl and dance about the small camp, and sometimes talk in "unknown tongues."[8] This activity varies in intensity, rising to peaks during certain testimonies and at the altar service that closes the meeting. These peaks mark the discovery of sin and come about as follows.

Each member must testify at each meeting that he has been saved and is now without sin. If he has unknowingly sinned since his last testimony, however, the Holy Ghost will refuse to accept his statement. To announce this, He manifests Himself in the body of some other member, making him shout and scream, jump and whirl, talk tongues, and in general create such a commotion that the testifier cannot continue. If he tries, the Holy Ghost sets off two or three other persons, or even the whole congregation. Such an incident--a "reproof"--is accepted as proof of sin and requires that the sinner go to the altar to kneel and pray for forgiveness. Other members join him to aid his petition. Finally, when the Holy Ghost accepts the prayer and quiets down, the absolved member may resume his place.

This practice serves several functions. It induces believers to avoid socially disapproved behavior and to conform even in thought to the norms of the group. It serves as an accepted outlet and a ready-made rationalization for unconscious aggressive tendencies. Furthermore, it draws spectators, mostly young people who come to laugh at the antics of the members but who are nevertheless impressed by the powers of the Jesus Only spirit and constitute potential members for the sect. The practice also raises problems, for members who receive frequent reproofs sometimes tend to backslide. For example, an early member who donated land for the camp became so enraged over having all his testimonies interrupted that he resigned and ordered the group off his land. He was perhaps an incorrigible sinner, but the sect nevertheless had to find a new site. There are apparently no controls on this practice. During the field session one member, a girl of eighteen, almost disrupted the sect by giving reproofs at almost every testimony. This delighted the spectators but caused no end of worry to the members, who could not understand how they had sinned. They had no means of intervening in these actions of the Holy Ghost; yet they realized that something had gone wrong. Attendance dropped and the matter became critical. Fortunately for the sect, the situation finally worked itself out. The girl's younger sister, against whom a great deal of this aggression had been directed, finally gave up in disgust and quit the church, whereupon the girl calmed down and the meetings came back to normal.[9]

After the testimonies the Holy Ghost rests until the altar service which closes the meeting, when repentant sinners kneel at the rostrum to pray for salvation. Then, again perceiving sin, He reactivates Himself in His devotees to show that the candidates are not fully repentant and thus not ready for conversion. This is often obvious, for some spectators kneel at the altar only to mock. Yet, the Holy Ghost shouts just as loud at others who beg forgiveness sincerely and want to join the sect.

Like the Presbyterian officers, Brother White and his wife rigidly refuse to adapt their doctrine, ritual, or moral standards to community norms. They condemn as sinful such practices as smoking, drinking, dancing, and non-marital sexual activity, and they fail to provide substitute recreational activities. They feel that participation in regular meetings should be edification enough for the righteous and pity those who must turn to sin for pleasure. Few villagers find sense in such a view. Those who do join the sect follow the rules rigidly and in so doing cut themselves off from community social life, making religion the major feature of their lives. Most of them were social isolates even before joining, however, and although membership decreases their interaction with other villagers it provides a group that fully accepts them. This factor also helps to explain the sect's special appeal for newcomers, who, cut off from their kinsmen and rejected by the old settlers, are looking for organizations that will give them security and an acceptable social life.[10]

Although this independent sect's puritanical proscriptions are somewhat foreign even to the newcomers, many aspects of its doctrine and ritual are not incompatible with the native Jamaican ideas which most ordinary-class villagers retain. Like the traditional belief system, Jesus Only doctrine assumes an intimate interaction between spirits and people, emphasizing in particular the concept of spirit possession. Also, despite its stress on a single God it does not deny the existence of lower spirits. Members and even leaders do, in fact, believe in ghosts, angels, and the devil as active supernatural beings.[11] The highly emotional services with their dancing, whirling, and unknown tongues are also compatible with native Jamaican patterns. At the same time, Jesus Only doctrine and ritual are manifestly Christian, which greatly increases their appeal for ordinary-class people. Persons who join the sect gain prestige by demonstrating their conversion and their acceptance by an acknowledged Christian religious body.

Finally, Brother and Sister White offer useful services to their followers. They give their time and advice freely to members who request it, and impose but little upon their finances. Not dependent upon the sect for their livelihood, they do not try to profit from it, and normally take collections only to meet operating expenses. Indeed, their competitors rumor that they are quite wealthy and have large properties in other districts. Brother White also performs faith healing, a talent which is offered free to members and which only they seem to appreciate. The Jesus Only sect thus has considerable value for its few members in spite of its shortcomings. The other independent sect of the community exhibits fewer of these weaknesses, functions more efficiently, and has a correspondingly larger membership.

The Church of God

Located in Zion Hill near the Orange River border, the Church of God serves both districts. It was started in 1941 by a woman evangelist and remained quite small for some years. The present leader, who at that time led a group in another village, came occasionally to preach. When the evangelist died in 1948 he moved permanently to Orange River, took over the sect, and assumed the title of Elder. Since that time he has increased the membership from about twelve to over sixty and has induced his flock to construct a substantial stone church building. He leads groups in other districts as well, and often travels to them to preach. Deacons in each group conduct meetings in his absence. Elder attends Church of God conferences in Kingston and obtains literature from various organized bodies of this name, but has not yet affiliated formally with any of them.

The Church of God draws most of its members from Zion Hill and The Bottom, but includes over twenty villagers as well. Most of them belong to the ordinary class, but unlike Jesus Only people they are mainly old settlers from Bongo Town and the lower section of The Top and are well integrated into community life. The great success of this independent sect comes in large measure from the personality, organizational ability, and adaptability of its leader. Elder understands and shares the problems and values of his followers and potential followers, and has built his doctrine and rituals upon their beliefs and moral standards. An inspired speaker, he draws big audiences and induces many interested spectators to join the sect. He maintains interest by varying the tempo of his sermons and keeping them short, interspersing them with hymns and Bible readings. He dwells at length on moral subjects, but follows the Jamaican code rather than the foreign ethic of the upper classes. While encouraging marriage, he accepts common-law unions and does not specifically condemn premarital sexual activities. In contrast to Brother White, he emphasizes salvation rather than sin, and although he prohibits such practices as drinking and dancing he finds substitute activities to replace them.

Elder holds two Sunday services, a prayer meeting, a youth assembly, and a testimonial meeting each week. In addition he organizes frequent recreational functions such as outings, lantern slide shows, and "concerts"--meetings involving skits, recitations, musical renditions, and games. Weddings, baptisms, special holiday programs, and guest speakers add still more variety to sect activities. Elder also offers other services. He gives helpful advice and financial aid to members with problems, makes special prayers for those who solicit his influence with the supernatural, and does some faith healing. Recognizing him as a friend who can be counted on when needed, members contribute willingly and generously to collections and special projects. As a result Elder has acquired several acres of land and is no longer dependent upon his followers for subsistence.

Minor officers of the sect also contribute visibly to its success. Elder has selected his three deacons carefully, paying particular attention to their popularity and qualities of leadership. They aid him in various ways and conduct minor meetings in his absence. One is popular with young people and has charge of youth assemblies. To prevent the formation of splinter groups, Elder has shrewdly compartmentalized the functions of his assistants.[13] He has kept the deacons from acquiring proficiency in an essential aspect of religious leadership--that of exciting spirit possession--by delegating this role to two other officers, the female evangelists. His training has been so clever that a deacon and an evangelist must cooperate to hold a successful meeting when he is absent. The latter alone cannot organize a ceremony, while the former cannot by himself bring it to a climax.

Even when Elder presides it is often an evangelist who climaxes the meeting with an altar service. She delivers an extremely emotional harangue, drawing potential members forward to pray for conversion and inducing the converts to get the spirit. Should a candidate become possessed, Elder may spend several hours with him to insure his conversion to the sect. To the outsider this ceremony seems like pandemonium; the building is in uproar as the members shout, stamp their feet, wave their arms, jump up and down, sing, and pray aloud. The evangelist's voice rises above all the rest, monotonously urging them to even greater efforts and exhorting sinners to kneel at the altar and pray for salvation. This technique has simplified Elder's task considerably, and as the sect's large membership indicates has been quite successful.

Church of God evangelists also perform faith healing, and one of them has earned wide renown in this capacity. Indeed, she excels Elder, who admits that his gift is not as strong and who claims no spectacular cures. Like many such practitioners, this woman pretends no personal healing power but attributes her successes to Jesus, who uses her as a medium and works through her hands. Her career began several years ago, she says, when after a long illness she was on the point of death. Jesus appeared to her in a vision, healed her, and sent her out to cure others. Since then she has devoted her life to evangelism, subsisting on voluntary contributions from grateful patients. Her technique consists chiefly in praying aloud over the kneeling patient, who also prays, and laying her hands on his head. In difficult cases she may use water or olive oil, but no other materials. Her activities have gained numerous members for the sect, for it is widely believed that successful healing depends upon the patient's conversion.[14]

As in the Jesus Only sect, a person achieves full membership in the Church of God only after sincere repentance of his sins and acceptance of Jesus Christ as the source of all salvation. Conversion occurs after oral confession and fervent prayer, when the Spirit of God possesses the body and cleanses it of sin. To remain saved the convert must testify repeatedly, confess any new sins he commits, conscientiously avoid temptation, and engage in frequent prayer. Regular possession of his body by the Holy Ghost demonstrates his continued grace. The baptismal rite, performed by Elder in a river, is administered only to converted adults. It washes away the final vestiges of sin, symbolizes the convert's rebirth, and validates his new status. No one who has not undergone all these experiences claims full membership in the sect. Indeed, many villagers say that one becomes a true Christian only after conversion and baptism in some such religious group. Yet, many non-members participate regularly in Church of God services. Some are striving for conversion and have candidate status, while others are simply "well-wishers" who enjoy the rituals. Many of the latter are young people who do not yet wish to curtail their sinful but pleasurable activities. They believe that youth is a time for sport and that no harm can be done by postponing salvation until later in life. The members indulge them, and denounce only the backsliders--former converts who have fallen back into sinful lives and are now inactive.

The Church of God clearly serves a different class of people than either the Jesus Only sect or the churches and has quite different functions. Its doctrine and rituals conform more closely to community norms and its services are more openly recreational and enjoyable. It motivates its members to adhere to these norms rather than to escape from them. Yet, the two independent sects show similarities. Their ordinary-class members value both modern Western and native Jamaican patterns and seek affiliation with groups that combine the two. Most villagers see the independent sects as more Christian and thus more truly religious than either cults or churches. Those who join them gain both prestige as Christians and opportunities for communicating with spirits. Finally, the independent sects offer members social, psychological, and economic security in some measure by providing accepted, stable groups of orientation under dependable and understanding leaders. The cults serve similar functions, but on different priority scales. They exhibit different native-Christian syntheses, weighting the traditional rather than the modern Western side of religion, and they appeal to still different people.

The Zion Revival Cult

Zion Revival bands dot the Jamaican countryside everywhere, and eight of them occur within a two-mile radius of Orange River. Rather atypically, the villagers lend little support to this most popular of Jamaican cults, however, and the local group has all but given up its losing battle against competition from neighboring bands, village independent sects, and Pocomanians. Before discussing this somewhat aberrant, almost defunct group, it will therefore be instructive to describe the cult generally.[15] Each band develops individual peculiarities under its independent leader, but they all conform to a single basic pattern. The cult's odd ideological system, which is manifestly Christian but which involves extensive revisions of orthodox sectarian features, forms a good point of departure for this analysis.

Zion Revivalists believe in God, Christ, and the Holy Ghost, both as individual spirits and as aspects of an indivisible Trinity. God, the creator and supreme ruler of the universe, is a demanding, vengeful spirit who ordains punishment for persons who violate His laws but ignores those who obey them. He remains aloof from human beings and disinterested in their affairs, and can be approached only indirectly through the angels who assist Him in administering the universe. His Son Jesus has a greater and more benevolent interest in people, and dispenses eternal salvation to persons who have true faith in Him and sincerely repent of their sins. Jesus is also a curing spirit, the ultimate source of all healing forces. He delegates many of these powers to the Holy Ghost, who in turn passes them on to deserving persons. The recipients, usually cult leaders, become curing specialists. The Holy Ghost also dispenses spiritual gifts such as the ability to prophesy or interpret unknown tongues.[16] Like God and Christ, He operates largely through angel intermediaries.

Opposing these forces of righteousness, evil powers strive constantly for the spiritual destruction of mankind. Satan himself is always present tempting people and trying to win their souls. His legions of fallen angels assist him, employing various underhanded devices to delude men and lure them into lives of sin. Fallen angels often attempt to invade Zion Revival ceremonies, but the members and the good spirits always see through their disguises and drive them away. Ghosts also work for Satan, for the shadows of righteous people do not wander the earth but go after death to a "place of rest" until the Day of Judgment. Some Zion Revivalists claim that ghosts do not really exist--that the apparitions seen by some persons are actually fallen angels disguised as ghosts to deceive the unsuspecting. According to this theory the shadows of the sinful go to a "place of torment" to await consignment to Hell on Judgment Day.[17] Whether a person is good or bad his soul, a distinct spiritual entity equated with the breath, returns upon death to God, who later blows it into the body of a new baby.

Zion Revival has its ultimate purpose in the worship of God, and its ceremonies abound with prayers and other Christian rituals in adoration of Him. However, since He remains too remote for effective communication, cult members must direct much of their attention to His angel assistants. The heavenly angels act primarily as messengers, transmitting God's Word to converts and reporting back to heaven on the state of human affairs. They also run various errands for the other members of the Trinity. Apart from these tasks the angels have powers of their own and can choose specific persons to protect, teach, and initiate into the cult. Indeed, Zion Revivalists depend so heavily upon these spirits and emphasize them so strongly that their concern with the higher Deities often seems secondary and superficial.

There are literally thousands of heavenly angels, who vary greatly in status, rank, and power. They belong to different spiritual "nations" (a term denoting tribes and castes as well as modern states) and speak correspondingly different unknown tongues. All informants agree that the angels have different names, personalities, specialties, and other characteristics, but give vague and contradictory statements when questioned about details. Few cultists attempt to name or describe any but the archangels Gabriel, Michael, Raphael and Miriam, who stand at the peak of the angelic hierarchy and are responsible only to the three high Gods. Gabriel is the most powerful and active of the four. He speaks all languages, shows preference for vigorous hymns, and likes particularly the color red. Michael has a more sedate character and prefers slow hymns and blue shades. The peaceful Raphael likes yellow hues and lively tunes, while Miriam, the gentlest angel, loves soft, lilting songs and the color white. Beyond these points cultists give widely varying answers or admit that they do not know. All affirm that a person possessed by an angel assumes the personality and behavioral traits of that spirit, but only cult leaders claim the ability to name the angel by observing the devotee.

In interviews, Zion Revivalists maintain stoutly that such historical Christian figures as prophets and saints finished their earthly work during Biblical times and no longer participate in worldly affairs. Nevertheless these beings, particularly the Old Testament prophets, seem to behave like angels. They give cultists messages in visions, possess them at ceremonies, and even act as personal guardians and mentors to them.[18] Despite extensive questioning this contradiction remains unresolved. Indeed, Zion Revivalists seem to repress awareness of it, and when pressed either deny that prophets interact with them or say that they are angels.

Zion Revival group organization and ceremonies reflect these beliefs and seem designed to facilitate communication and interaction with angels. According to cultists these spirits determine the initiation of new members and their subsequent attainment of status in the group. The angel converts the candidate by possessing him, usually at a ceremony but theoretically at any time and place. Anyone may be selected for conversion, but in practice the spirit usually chooses a well-wisher of the cult.

The person possessed for the first time goes into a deep trance, falling down, rolling about on the ground, and moaning. At intervals he may lie quietly; at others he "groans," or over-breathes through constricted throat muscles, emitting loud, harsh, rasping sounds likened by non-members to the grunts of a pig.[19] He may stay in this condition for several hours, during which time the cult leader and members watch over him to see that he does not hurt himself. Later they help him stand up and "labor." This consists in stamping forcefully with the right foot while bending forward at the waist and expelling the breath, then straightening up while inhaling deeply and stamping more lightly with the left foot. The laborer groans with each breath.[20] After he has labored for a time, others bring him out of the trance by seating him and reading the Bible to him. Upon emerging from his first trance the new convert is dazed, bewildered, and perhaps sore from his contortions. He remembers nothing about the experience and usually does not like the situation. Nevertheless, if he continues to attend meetings the spirit almost always possesses him again. After several trances he gets used to the feeling and begins to enjoy it. Then other angels can possess him and make him labor in unison with the other members.

The converting angel remains his personal guardian and mentor, protecting him from evil influences and initiating him into successive spiritual secrets. It reveals itself first during possession, appearing before him as a human figure duplicating his actions, and later tutors him through dreams and visions. When his learning has progressed sufficiently the angel shows him a uniform which he must then have made to wear at ceremonies, and may award him a spiritual gift such as prophesy, the ability to see spirits, or the speaking or interpretation of an unknown tongue.[21] Converts differ in the kind of training they receive and in the length of time they need to attain this stage. A few experience such revelations during their first possession, others take several months, and some never achieve them.

The member reports his visitation to the leader, who interprets it as a sign that the angel has given him a specialized "portion," or office involving particular duties and functions in the spiritual activities of the cult. Zion Revival as a whole has dozens of different portions, but small bands like those in St. Mary have only a few. One of the most common is the Bands Blower, who announces the arrival of each new angel to the ceremony by "giving the sound," or making vocal imitations of trumpet signals. Another, the Bandsman, takes charge of ceremonies and leads the laboring when the leader has other tasks. The Searcher stands in the center of the laboring group and "searches the bands" for evil spirits, reporting his findings to the leader, who then assigns the Cutter or some other specialist in "cutting and clearing" to chase them away. The Interpreter translates unknown tongues spoken by possessed persons and explains their meanings to the audience. The Messenger collects spiritual messages given by angels to members and reports them to the leader, and also relays instructions from the leader to the various functionaries of the band. These and other portion-holders labor normally with the band most of the time, performing their special duties only when occasions for them arise. Leaders of bands which lack one or another of these portions must serve these functions themselves. Despite behavioral variations among Zion Revival groups, experienced observers can often infer a person's portion from his actions.

The member, if he shows promise, continues to receive instruction from his personal angel after attaining his portion. He may acquire additional spiritual gifts and eventually gain the qualifications necessary for band leadership. Male leaders are called "Captains" and females "Mothers." A band should have one of each, either of which may be the higher, and many groups are led by married couples. Some acquire bands through succession, others split off from larger groups, and a few are able to build new bands. Most of them claim to have received "calls" to leadership in visions. In any case, a successful leader must have considerable experience in the cult, good organizational ability, and a high degree of verbal proficiency. He should also have the gifts of healing, divining, and prophesy to demonstrate clearly his spiritual powers. Competition for followers is great, and the good leader must win recognition both from his own members and from other Zion Revival chiefs. Many cultists claim to be spiritually qualified Captains or Mothers, but simply lack the personality characteristics necessary for successful band leadership. They join other groups as secondary leaders or remain independent Captains and Mothers and attend the ceremonies of others.

The band leader has complete authority over the ceremonial activities of his followers, and in addition exerts considerable control over their secular lives. They must obey his every order without hesitation when at the camp and contribute money, food, and labor generously to band projects.

They should ask his advice before attempting any major venture. Those who fail to submit to his authority may be expelled. In return the leader has obligations to them, and must merit their trust and dependence. He organizes and finances most ceremonies, counsels and teaches his followers about various subjects, lends them money, and heals them without charge. Some leaders run "sick clubs," or health insurance plans, to pay the expenses of members who need additional medical care or hospitalization. The successful Captain or Mother thus earns the unqualified support of his followers.

The angels theoretically assign all spiritual portions, but the leader interprets their somewhat ambiguous directives and in effect makes these decisions himself. He must sometimes exercise considerable ingenuity in convincing disappointed or envious members that his interpretations are correct, and his decisions must also meet the approval of other cult leaders. The Captain or Mother assigns temporal, or non-spiritual offices as well. Non-converted members hold these positions, which carry little prestige but are as essential to the proper functioning of the band as portions. An important temporal officer is the Nurse, who assists possessed members, serving them water, adjusting their uniforms, and seeing that they do not hurt themselves. An Armor Bearer acts as a personal attendant to each Captain and Mother, performing duties similar to those of the Nurse.

Another functionary, the Cymbal Man or Girl, sings the special "cymbal" songs that set the rhythm and pace of the laboring.[22] This officer must gauge a tempo that will keep the laborers fresh and yet satisfy the possessing angels. He needs considerable experience, for different angels demand different rhythms. Each band has an official Bible Reader or Secretary to render scripture readings and "trace" hymns (read each line aloud before it is sung to remind participants of the words).[23] Two drummers, one playing a "rattling" or snare drum and the other a bass, announce the meetings and accompany the "choruses" which are sung when spirits are not present.[24] A Vinyard Keeper cares for the ceremonial grounds and arranges paraphernalia for meetings. Large bands may have additional temporal officers, while in small groups one person may serve two or three functions. Well-wishers sometimes help the Nurses or act as drummers.

Most ceremonies take place in the leader's yard, around a consecrated spot called the Seal and in a small, wattle and thatch camp. The Seal is marked by a ring of stones and often a tall bamboo pole carrying a flag. It contains a small altar, usually simply a platform, upon which are placed candles, flowers, and glasses of water to attract angels. Growing plants at the base of the pole also serve this function. The camp, normally about twenty by thirty feet in area, has two sections separated by a rail. One end contains benches for spectators, while the other, the ceremonial area, holds a few chairs, a kerosene lamp, and a small table for flowers, consecrated water, candles, hymn books, and a Bible.

Members don their uniforms, which are specified in detail by their angels, for meetings. Women usually wear white dresses, while men's clothing is more varied. Most uniforms include elaborately tied "wraps," or turbans, of one or two colors, which are often twisted into long peaks at the front. Some converts stick pencils into them to symbolize their ability to receive spiritual messages. Cloth sashes and belts are also worn, and to them qualified persons tie scissors or knives to signify their functions of "cutting and clearing" evil spirits, or keys to indicate knowledge of spiritual secrets. Leaders carry whistles for signaling. Shoes are unnecessary, but Captains usually wear suits at ceremonies.

Successful groups hold services or prayer meetings frequently, ideally every Sunday but actually about twice a month. The drums begin at about six o'clock in the evening, using the distinctive Zion Revival rhythm to announce the meeting. Early arrivals sing choruses, visit, and dance while waiting. After about an hour the leader enters the camp and begins the rites with announcements of coming events. Hymns, prayers, testimonies, Bible readings and interpretations, and short speeches follow in quick succession. Spirits may descend to possess individuals momentarily, making them stagger, wave their arms, say "how-de-do," and talk tongues. Similar to sectarian rites, these activities last for perhaps two hours. Then the band forms a circle and begins laboring to call the spirits in force, spectators and assistants helping with hymns. If the members are tired or the singing weak, the angels may not come. When this occurs the leader charges the audience with carrying "destruction" or with apathy toward religion, and after a few more hymns and prayers ends the meeting. Large ceremonies with strong singing, however, usually attract at least a few angels.

The first angel possesses all the laborers, doing it so unobtrusively that observers notice only when the song ends and laboring continues. This spirit stays for perhaps fifteen minutes and then departs, leaving the converts staggering about in confusion, groaning and mumbling. The next angel soon arrives, possessing first one member and then others. The Bands Blower then announces the new "order," and the band starts laboring again to the rhythmic singing of the Cymbal Man.

"Orders" are numbered, the higher ones involving stronger angels, heavier and more unified groaning, and the attainment of deeper spiritual understanding. Ceremonies progress to successively higher ones, beginning for example with 5, then moving to 12, 26, 43, 60, and finally 61. They use a different laboring beat and groaning pattern with each order, but few bands associate specific rhythms with given numbers or particular angels.[25] The height which a group can attain depends upon the qualifications of its leader. All leaders questioned claimed to labor at the 60 or 61 level, but all doubted that most others could aggain this height.[26] Some Kingston Captains say they can exceed 61, but others regard such claims as mere pretenses.

As the band reaches higher orders the groaning becomes stronger and the converts go deeper into communion with the angels. A member occasionally receives a revelation, stops laboring, and goes into a special act. He may shout the message in tongues, call for a hymn or psalm to be rendered, run, dance, whirl, or perform prostrations at the Seal. The message completed, he returns to the circle and resumes laboring. The Searcher periodically breaks away to look for evil spirits, the Messenger runs back and forth with reports, and the Cutter dashes about clearing away destruction with an imaginary sword. After an hour or two the members tire and one by one come out of their trances. Then, after more hymns and prayers, and perhaps an altar service like those of the sects, the meeting ends.

Many Zion Revival bands go on pilgrimages to other districts and parishes, holding such meetings on street corners and crossroads. Some small groups spend a great deal of time on the road, gaining their subsistence from collections. Every village seems to have at least one consecrated crossing for the use of such groups, and street meetings of this sort seldom fail to draw sizeable audiences. Bands from various places occasionally hold services at the Orange River junction.

Zion Revivalists also hold more elaborate ceremonies called Tables for particular purposes and special occasions. Most successful leaders hold Thanksgiving Tables annually, often following them with feasts of rice and curried goat meat, to celebrate their bands' good fortune. Members sometimes make similar ceremonies to give thanks for good luck or recovery of health. Uplifting Tables are held by leaders to dedicate new Seals, and by members to validate new portions or to gain spiritual aid in combating sickness. Memorial Tables honor dead leaders and relatives. Fasting Tables, held to purify members before events such as baptism, involve long periods of praying, fasting, and meditation.

Tables take their name from the long, narrow tables that stand on the Seal and form the center of the rites. They are covered with white cloths and hold vases of flowers, glasses of consecrated water, and crackers. Candles stand at intervals around the edges. Fasting Tables have only these items, but other types hold also various fruits, bottles of soda pop, and loaves of bread molded in decorative shapes such as crosses and doves. Members often build temporary booths for the festivities and decorate the yard with flowers and leaves. They must also lay in supplies for visitors.

The leader invites other Captains and Mothers to bring their bands and help with the laboring. In return he must feed them during their stay, provide accommodations if they remain overnight, and pay their fares home. The visitors should return the invitation and services at some later date. In this way each band can attend several major ceremonies during the year while bearing the expense of only one. Thus joined by ties of reciprocal obligation, groups of bands tend to evolve loose, informal confederacies. Tables involve considerable expense, but the entrance fees paid by spectators often balance the costs.

The Table usually begins on Sunday evening after a preliminary period of drumming and choruses. Prayers, scripture readings, and other events seen at regular services mark the first stages; then the leader formally announces the purpose of the Table and invites the spectators to light the candles. Candle lighting has the dual function of aiding the general cause and giving the lighter some vague spiritual benefits, and leaders seldom have trouble inducing the spectators to comply. When all the candles are burning, the visiting Captains and Mothers make speeches and offer prayers to further the cause of the ceremony. If it is an Uplifting Table given by a member to validate a new portion the incumbent must relate his spiritual experiences to prove his qualifications. Visiting leaders may examine him. If he passes, as he usually does, his leader formally appoints him and presents his new uniform, which has been previously blessed.

The cultists then begin to labor, and as at prayer meetings spend an hour or two communing with the angels. Around midnight the laboring ends and the members gather around to "break the table." They give thanks in prayer for the spiritual aid received, and recite a formal grace. Then, after two leaders break a loaf of bread across the table, the members divide the food and partake of the feast. Afterwards they say grace again and then sit back to rest. Another period of laboring may follow, and after an early morning altar service the meeting ends. If a dinner accompanies the Table it takes place the next morning. The dinner is a social function, having little or no religious significance. Tables given by big urban bands may be more elaborate, sometimes lasting two or three days. Those held by smaller bands in the country, however, seldom exceed the proportions described above, and many are even smaller.

The Zion Revival band of Orange River held only one small prayer meeting during the entire field study, and this a failure. Only four members including the Mother, and four spectators including the writer, attended. No laboring occurred, although two converts became possessed intermittently and stumbled around a bit talking tongues. This group formerly held regular, successful meetings, but during the last few years has become almost extinct. Only six active converts of Zion Revival, including leaders, reside in the village at present, and of these only three remain loyal to the local band. Several more cultists live in The Bottom, but only one attends local ceremonies. Even the Captain spends most of his time with a second band in another village and leaves his wife, the Mother, in charge.

The Mother has some repute as a healer and apparently derives most of her income from this activity. She claims to have the gift of "reading," or divining, by gazing into a glass of clear water, and also that of healing through angelic powers. She uses exotic oils, herbal concoctions, and magical rituals to effect her cures. Informants say that she once practiced as a Nana at childbirths. She lives rent free in the yard of a follower whose son, a dwarf with congenital syphilis, she is said to have partially cured. Despite her talents, however, the band is breaking up.

The remaining members are somewhat atypical of Zion Revivalists generally. Although all belong to the lowest social class, they deviate markedly from its norms, much like the Jesus Only people depart from ordinary-class standards. Two of them are virtual hermits who talk as little as possible to non-cultists. Two more are such religious compulsives that sensible interviews with them are impossible. Their conversations resemble testimonies more than rational discussions, and they continually fall into trances when talking about religion. A fifth, one of the lowest men in the village class structure, is lucid but quite paranoid, and considered rather obnoxious both by the villagers and the writer. The Mother, apparently the sanest of the group, distrusts whites and refused to grant the writer interviews. The Captain, a good informant, was seldom available. In contrast, members of other bands proved to be quite normal, friendly, and cooperative. The disintegration of the local group has apparently left as active members only persons with marked personality problems.

The reasons for this band's failure are not entirely clear, but some hypotheses may be advanced. Internal dissension seems to have constituted one factor. The direction of the Captain's attention to another village, probably for sexual reasons, almost certainly furthered the band's decline, as did increasing competition from neighboring Zion Revival groups. Also, the rise of the Church of God and the resurgence after a period without leadership of the popular local Pocomania group coincided with the decline of this organization and may have contributed to its failure. The role of Pocomania in this process is rather unique, resulting from some peculiar local circumstances, and will be discussed in a later chapter. It seems clear, however, that Orange River is simply too small to support more than one permanent cult group in addition to its sects and churches. A third cult, Convince, has also become defunct in the village.

The Convince Cult

This cult, known in other localities as Fankee or Convince Flenkee, bears the popular nickname "Bongo" in St. Mary. More Africanoid than either Zion Revival or Pocomania, it has relatively few members and seems to be dying out generally. It is strongest in the two easternmost parishes of St. Thomas and Portland, becomes more thinly distributed in St. Andrew and St. Mary, and dies out altogether in St. Catherine and St. Ann. This distribution, as well as certain ceremonial features and some local traditions, support the theory that the cult had its origins among the Maroons in the Blue Mountains.[27]

Convince in St. Mary has neither groups nor leaders--indeed, it has no formal organization at all. Rather, independent Bongo Men, as the members are called, live here and there about the countryside and invite one another to their infrequent ceremonies.[28] Each Bongo Man has one or two assistants termed Apprentices or Grooms, whose duties resemble those of Armor Bearers in Zion Revival and who expect eventually to become Bongo Men themselves. Other persons help out at ceremonies, but none make any claim to cult membership. Some St. Mary Bongo Men belong also to the Pocomania cult and occasionally hold meetings which include both Pocomania and Convince rites. Even when not thus invited the spirits of either cult may invade ceremonies of the other if their devotees are present. Despite this rather odd, informal tie, the two cults are in strong competition, and most members of each distrust the spirits and purposes of the other.[29]

There were no Convince members living in Orange River during the field study, but one Bongo Man, a former resident with relatives in the village, held two special meetings there. The writer also attended one major Convince ceremony and witnessed several dual Pocomania-Convince meetings in other districts. Interviews with numerous Bongo Men and well-wishers provided supplementary information. Still, the writer had only a tenuous tie with the cult, and his data are neither as complete nor as well-validated as he would like. The present account may thus contain minor errors.

Bongo Men believe in the Christian deities but pay little active attention to them. They deal instead almost exclusively with the ghosts of persons who actually or supposedly belonged to the cult when alive. Some of these duppies come from Africa, where Convince presumably originated; others derive from the slaves who allegedly represented its early Jamaican manifestations; and still others are the shadows of more recently deceased persons. The more powerful ghosts are former Obeah Men and Maroons, and all exhibit traits considered African by contemporary Jamaicans. Like their devotees, these spirits lack formal organization and leaders. Each is an independent individual with his own name, history, and personality. They possess living cultists at ceremonies and, using their bodies, interact with Apprentices and well-wishers, who come to recognize them and know their idiosyncracies.

Bongo ghosts personally select their devotees, usually picking Apprentices, well-wishers, or established members who already have other spirits. Duppies of either sex may possess both men and women.[30] The relationship, initiated by possession and resting upon mutual obligations and privileges, endures as long as it remains satisfactory to both parties. The devotee allows the spirit to use his body at ceremonies to dance, smoke, drink rum, visit with living acquaintances, and perform other activities that require corporeal form. He must also feed his ghost at annual sacrifice rituals. In return the ghost protects him against adverse spiritual influences and helps him work Obeah. Not all Bongo Men take advantages of this latter service, but some become famous Obeah Men.

Bongo spirits have generally bad reputations. Notoriously quick-tempered, they curse and sometimes attack spectators who displease them, and when offended treat the bodies of their devotees roughly. In extreme cases they may even kill their partners, usually by forcing them to climb trees and dive headfirst to the ground. Several informants reported having witnessed such murders, and the writer himself observed one fairly serious injury when an angry ghost hurled his devotee through a wattled wall. Bongo Men thus lead somewhat dangerous lives, although Apprentices attend constantly to prevent such occurrences. Nevertheless, cultists rarely try to dissolve their partnerships, but strive instead to keep their spirits well satisfied and their audiences firmly disciplined.

Christians maintain that Convince spirits are minions of the Devil and point out that they emphasize such sinful activities as cursing, drinking, sexual promiscuity, and fighting. This contention is supported by the fact that the ghosts express willingness to perform sorcery as readily as benevolent Obeah. Moreover, they seem to stand in terror of Judgment Day, for they take alarm at flashes of light and run from even the flares of matches, calling them "small judgments." Defenders of Convince admit these tendencies, but regard the cult as an independent, non-Christian religion rather than an anti-Christian movement. It is an "African" religion, they say, whose spirits make their own rules and look upon the Christian moral code as foreign. Their powers are amoral, operating without reference to good and evil, and since they reject the concept of sin they readily perform actions that others believe to be sinful. Well-wishers maintain that most of the ghosts are really quite nice, once you understand their point of view, become used to their obscene language, and learn to avoid offending them.

Convince ceremonies do in fact exhibit numerous Africanoid characteristics, as well as various other traits which the members believe to be African.[31] However, they also include many Christian elements. Three types of ceremonies, all built on a single basic plan, occur. The simplest are regular meetings, which take place irregularly and normally involve only two or three Bongo Men. Some of them constitute memorial services for recently deceased cult members and invite them to possess the participants, while others pacify offended spirits or express gratitude to them for recent favors. The annual Sacrifice ceremonies held by each Bongo Man are more elaborate, including feasts and secret sacrificial rites in addition to the regular events. The host usually invites all the Bongo Men living in the area to such affairs, and like Zion Revival hosts must provide them with food, accommodations, and transportation home. The Sacrifice ceremony satisfies the minimum requirements of the member's spirits for the year. Finally, some Bongo Men hold special ceremonies for particular necromantic purposes when hired by well-wishers or others who need spiritual aid. Usually only one Bongo Man performs at such a meeting. He first conducts secret Obeah rites to secure the services of his spirit and assign him his task. He then holds a public meeting, similar to a regular service, as a goodwill offering and partial advance payment to the spirit. One of the Orange River meetings was of this type, having the purpose of compelling a judge to acquit the man who financed it of a narcotics charge. The ghost failed, incidentally, and the man was later convicted.

The ceremony takes place in the yard of the Bongo Man or the person who hires him, and usually begins on Saturday evening. Well-wishers build a temporary booth for the rites and under it place a small table holding a vase of flowers, an oil lamp, three candles, a Bible, a hymn book, and the Bongo Man's uniforms. Some cultists have seals similar to those of Zion Revivalists which must also be prepared. A Christian prayer meeting designed to draw spectators usually precedes the main ceremony, beginning at about dusk. Bongo Men do not participate in this service, which is led by well-wishers. Visitors, who pay a sixpence entrance fee, join in the hymns, prayers, and Bible readings when they arrive. There are no drums, but choruses are accompanied by hand-clapping. At about eight o'clock the Bongo Men, who have been drinking rum and smoking ganja (marihuana) in the house, join the crowd. The congregation then begins to call the spirits by singing hymns in a slow, dirge-like tempo called "long meter," and by singing special Convince songs. Lively tunes with a distinctive rhythm and accompanied by hand-clapping, the latter are roughly comparable to the cymbals of the Zion Revival and Pocomania cults.[32] The Bongo Men dance individually to them, using various different steps, and the ghosts later do the same.

In Convince as in Haitian Vodun, possession involves equestrian phraseology; the ghosts "mount" and "ride" their "horses," or devotees, and often call Apprentices "Grooms" (cf. Herskovits, 1937b: chap. 8). They are much more violent than Zion Revival angels, and more difficult to control. The ghost comes to the meeting suddenly, and somewhat like the Old Man of the Sea in the tale of Sinbad the Sailor, jumps without warning on the Bongo Man's neck, knocking him forward in a dive to the ground. The devotee lands on his head and somersaults onto his back. Then, apparently trying to throw off the spirit, he thrashes wildly about on the ground, kicking, flailing his arms, grunting, and fighting off anyone who tries to grab him. His Apprentice finally secures a hold at the back of his neck, straddles him, and holds him face up a few inches off the ground. In this position the possessed man propels himself rapidly head-first about the yard with his heels, the Groom steering him away from walls and posts. Spectators must fend for themselves. After several minutes of this the Bongo Man allows himself to be pulled upright, whereupon he begins to whirl, dance, and again struggle to get free. To control him the Groom must keep a firm hold, first with one hand and then the other, at the nape of his neck where the spirit rides. The Groom needs considerable agility, for the ghost struggles with vigor. Finally the spirit calms down and accepts the situation, and can be turned loose. The Groom must continue to attend him constantly, however, for he may go into another fit at the slightest provocation.

Once the ghost gains control the Bongo Man undergoes a physical transformation. His face assumes a grimace which the well-wishers insist matches the dead man's features. He bends forward at the waist, hunches his shoulders, holds his arms away from his sides with elbows and wrists stiffly bent, and points his knees and feet at 45 degree angles to the front. All ghosts have these traits, yet each presents a distinctive appearance. The writer observed one, for example, who had a paralyzed left arm, crossed eyes, and a limp, defects apparently derived from his original body.

The Groom rolls the Bongo Man's trouser legs up to the knees, takes off his shirt and shoes, and dresses him in his uniform. In most cases the latter consists of simply a "crown"--a peaked headdress made from a large, stiffly starched, red cotton kerchief, usually with a plaid print. It is folded into a triangle, wrapped around the head with the apex rising above the forehead, and tied at the front. Some spirits also wear cloth belts, sashes, or specially made shirts. Each ghost has his own uniform, and the devotee must be dressed again whenever a new ghost possesses him. Clothed to his satisfaction, the ghost shouts "Good morning to all creole people," recites a prayer, and begins to dance. While dancing he calls for hymns and psalms, leads Bongo songs, smokes constantly, and occasionally whirls for minutes on end. Between numbers he stalks back and forth across the yard, converses with well-wishers, drinks rum, or insults spectators. He talks in a husky voice different from that of his devotee, and uses an odd dialect of English that is almost incomprehensible to persons who do not attend Convince ceremonies frequently. The writer had to use interpreters, and had only begun to understand the spirits at the end of the field trip.

Jamaicans say that the Bongo ghosts speak an "African" dialect of English which contains a number of African words. The ghosts tend to use these words, or substitute English terms, to designate significant objects. For example, they call tobacco "concurras," cigarettes "whitezies" or "white papers," and rum "malav." They refuse to drink from china cups--"small piss-pots"--and demand their rum in "gold cups," or small calabashes. Chairs are "four-foot asses," and Bongo Men usually straddle them or sit on the backs. They are afraid of dogs, believing them to be "small tigers," and sometimes go into convulsions upon seeing them.

Most Bongo ghosts take great interest in sex and have few inhibitions. They use scandalously obscene language, play shamelessly with their penises through their trousers, chase women about the yard, and make lewd propositions and suggestions to girls. Some attempt to rape female spectators, and failing, become so excited sexually that they fall down and simulate intercourse with the ground or with other Bongo Men. These actions delight the spectators, even pious

Christians who bitterly denounce much less sinful behavior in other situations. Such unrestrained aggression must also constitute a highly effective emotional release for the devotees, who, of course, cannot be blamed for their actions when possessed by ghosts (cf. Mischel and Mischel, 1958: 254).

The individual personalities of Bongo ghosts show through these general patterns. Despite their quick tempers many of these spirits are friendly, sociable beings who make lasting friendships with well-wishers. One called Old Tinny, for example, liked the writer and gave him extensive information about the cult. Another, Old Johnson, who possessed the same Bongo Man, had been killed by a planter and hated all white men including the writer. Other ghosts observed at Convince meetings included Needles, a sad, defensive spirit who kept telling people not to feel sorry for the horses; Kiszemba, a virtually unintelligible African; Kill-and-Cure, an ill-tempered, ugly old Maroon who delighted in frightening children; Old Watt, a timid individual with a speech impediment; and Fire Key Master, a former boiler in a sugar factory who loved to dance on burning coals.

Possessed Bongo Men are supposed to perform remarkable feats. Many informants claimed to have seen them climb coconut palms, sit far out on boughts that normally could not support even babies, and then climb down head first without using their hands or arms. Some asserted that Bongo Men can fly, and one usually reliable informant swore that he saw one jump through a tin roof without leaving a hole in it. The spirits do, in fact, seem uncommonly interested in climbing. They frequently try to escape the crowd to find trees, and sometimes have to be pulled down from the roofs of booths or houses.

Despite these powers, Convince ghosts cannot, like Zion Revival angels, possess more than one person at a given time, nor can two ghosts simultaneously ride one devotee. If one spirit is in possession, the second must wait his turn. The first ghost usually leaves quietly, often first giving notice of his intended departure, and the devotee starts, acts confused for a moment, and then wakes up. Subsequent ghosts mount with the same violent contortions as the first, and after a succession of such possessions the meeting ends without further formalities. One by one the spectators get tired and leave, and when the last ghost departs, usually at about dawn at regular meetings, the affair is over. Larger ceremonies, however, may last three or four days.

The sacrifice and the feast usually take place on the second day, the first early in the morning and the second about noon. The animal, which is always a male and usually a goat, is beheaded by an Apprentice with a single stroke of a machete after the Bongo Man blesses it with rum and psalms.

Then helpers unceremoniously drag the carcass away, butcher it, and curry it for the feast. The host selects the choicest cuts and has them cooked secretly without salt in a special pot, later serving them in private to his spirits along with other delicacies. For the dinner the cooks prepare rice and green bananas with the meat. When it is ready helpers gather banana leaves, split them into large squares to use as plates, and place them in a circle on the ground around the table. Bongo Men and Apprentices sit cross-legged before them and are served by helpers. The feast itself has little spiritual significance, and except for saying grace the cultists conduct it unceremoniously. After they finish, well-wishers divide and eat the remaining food without further ritual. Dancing and possession are resumed later and may continue for another day or more. The ceremony ends simply with a final Christian prayer and a solemn, ritual good-by to the spirits. Obeah rites, when they occur, are closely guarded, and the writer could obtain few data about them. They apparently resemble those practiced by Pocomanians, which will be discussed in a later chapter.

The Convince ceremonies in Orange River were quite successful in drawing spectators, but the cult itself has become defunct in the village. No new local Bongo Men have replaced the two who moved away or another who died some years ago. Only five well-wishers remain in the community, and of these three belong to other religious groups. None express any intention of joining the cult. It seems clear that Convince is dying elsewhere as well, for informants agree that Bongo Men are becoming rarer every year. The strong local Pocomania group, which also deals with ghosts and thus competes with Convince, may have contributed to this decline in Orange River, but probably more important generally is the failure of the Bongo cult to adapt to changing Jamaican values and beliefs.

Although it has adopted some superficial Christian patterns, Convince remains largely African in character, both in reality and in the view of Jamaicans. This fact reduces the cult's prestige and popularity, for ever increasing influences from Western civilization and modern Christianity continually filter down through the class system and promote even at the lower levels a growing devaluation of traits associated specifically with Africa. The term Bongo itself now has derogatory connotations. Moreover, in the face of a mounting value on Christianity, Convince retains and even emphasizes anti-Christian elements. These are too poorly integrated and weakly rationalized to give the cult direction and enable it to develop into an anti-Western or anti-white movement. Indeed, it cannot even maintain its status as religion. Most Jamaicans regard Convince as merely a dance--a spiritual but non-religious "jollification"--with necromantic associations. In Orange River only the five well-wishers, who are all conservative, depressed-class residents of Bongo Town, see it as even partially religious. Many persons refuse to attend meetings because of the cursing and other sinful behavior involved. Convince thus seems doomed, although it may survive for years among the more isolated and conservative people.

A significant factor in the decline of Convince may lie in its social structure.[33] Cults like Zion Revival and Pocomania which have definite group organizations fare better, at least partly because the leaders must make their groups appealing to potential members. Those who conform most closely to prevailing beliefs and values obtain the most converts, while those who fail to adjust soon lose their followers. The cults thus undergo continual modification as depressed-class culture changes, and through this process they disguise their anti-Western elements and cover their Africanoid patterns with Christian veneers. Convince, in contrast, makes few such adaptations. The Bongo Man, operating individually and independently, has no need for followers and thus no reason to adjust his religious responses to the ideas and attitudes of others. Indeed, many Bongo Men seem to antagonize and offend people deliberately. The Convince cult consequently attracts fewer and fewer converts as time and culture change proceed, and cannot maintain its numbers.

Summary and Transition

Orange River contains three types of religious groups;

churches, independent sects, and cults. Each type is associated with a different socio-economic class, tends to reflect the subculture of that class, and has evolved mechanisms for solving or controlling problems peculiar to it. Those classes which draw most heavily upon modern Western culture emphasize the more orthodox Christian forms of religion, while those which depend more upon the native Jamaican tradition tend to stress the syncretized, Africanoid cults. However, Western influences have become stronger every year, promoting changes at all social levels.

Acculturation has proceeded to such a degree among the elite of the village that they have met the inflexible demands of the churches and accepted without change the orthodox doctrine and moral code, the solemn and decorous ceremonial orientations, and the formal ecclesiastical structures of these prestigeous bodies. By steadfastly refusing to adapt their religious patterns to Jamaican conditions, the church leaders have forced the comfortable-class people to revise other aspects of their culture to meet orthodox standards. People of lower classes cannot or will not do so, and thus turn to other kinds of religion. The churches reflect the status anxieties of the elite, who use religious membership to help maintain the integrity of their group as a superior and dominant class. Upward mobile persons also join the churches, hoping that by so doing they can gain entry into elite circles.

The independent sects represent reactions to the inflexibility of church religion, and have developed through the process of splinter group formation that is so inherent in Jamaican social structure. Dissatisfied native leaders have broken off from the established churches to form these independent religious groups which are adapted to the needs and problems of the less fully acculturated ordinary class. They offer these people ceremonial and ideological forms that are compatible with persistent native Jamaican religious principles and at the same time remain manifestly Christian and thus prestigeous. The independent sects also fill gaps in the social lives of persons who in seeking compromises between modern Western and native Jamaican ideals have cut themselves off from both depressed-class and elite society. They grow and divide, always adapting to changes and variations in ordinary-class culture. One Orange River sect is associated with old settlers, for example, while the other has mostly newcomers as members. The leaders promote acculturation by offering various services and some measure of prestige to people who by joining their groups show their acceptance of Christian principles.

The cults exhibit great variation, but in general depend more upon the native Jamaican tradition. Arising under unschooled leaders who cling to Africanoid beliefs and ritual forms, they tend to be conservative and to adapt only reluctantly to acculturative changes. These groups receive most of their support from people of the socially isolated, tradition-oriented depressed class, to whom they provide dependable leaders, socially accepted mechanisms for releasing aggression, specified group statuses, economic and medical aid, and recreational facilities. Even these people, however, are subject to growing Western influences and become increasingly critical of non-Christian practices. To retain their support the cults must adjust to these changes and at the same time continue to provide their services. Zion Revival has met this challenge successfully, on the whole, through a process of splinter group formation, acquiring an outward appearance of nearly orthodox Christianity while remaining basically distinct from the independent sects. Its success has not been complete, however, for some leaders cannot find the proper balance between these conflicting factors and thus lose out in the struggle for followers. The Orange River group illustrates such failure. The Convince cult, in contrast to Zion Revival, has steadfastly resisted pressures toward change and now faces extinction. Remaining frankly African and explicitly non-Christian, it has been reduced by adverse public opinion to a small, scattered set of independent leaders without followers and with few chances of acquiring any.

Processes similar to those seen in Zion Revival and Convince may also be found in the Pocomania cult, which occupies an intermediate position on the Afro-Christian continuum. Pocomania is the strongest cult in Orange River, and discussion of it has been postponed in order to permit a more detailed and extended analysis. It is hoped that this analysis will clarify many of the points made above about cult religion and its functions.

Chapter 7

THE RURAL POCOMANIA CULT

Introductory Statement

Pocomania, or as its members prefer, Revival, ranges between Convince and Zion Revival on the Afro-Christian continuum and on the Jamaican scale of prestige and popularity. It bears resemblances to each of these other cults, but exhibits many distinctive features as well. Because the local bands and independent members that compose it develop idiosyncratic beliefs and ritual forms, the cult embraces wide variations within its basic ideological and ceremonial framework. At the same time, a complex network of social relationships binds the local units into larger, interlocking configurations, limiting the extent and direction of divergence among them.

The present chapter is centrally concerned with the role of Pocomania in Orange River, and consequently considers the idiosyncracies of the local cult group. It deals also with fundamental principles of the cult, however, and with other units in the St. Mary area. The intricate connections among these units, which form the regional configuration, have great significance for understanding Orange River Pocomania. Furthermore, the chapter provides for the introduction of another dimension of religious variation--that of rural and urban settlement patterns--to the study. It delineates general patterns of rural Pocomania which can be compared later with the cult's urban manifestations. The discussion begins with some historical and areal considerations.

Contexts of Orange River Pocomania

The local Pocomania band outdates the memories of the oldest living villagers. It goes back at least to the 1861 revival and probably has roots in an earlier Myalist or Native Baptist group. Long an exceptionally large and active band, it has traditionally formed the nucleus of St. Mary Pocomania and may have been a major center of development of the modern cult as a whole.[1] Around the turn of the century it was governed by one Father Leslie, who had tremendous prestige and influence among the other leaders in the area. His successor, Francis Walker, joined the group in 1900 at the age of eighteen and immediately showed great promise. Within a few years he had attained the high rank of Shepherd, learned to work Obeah, and married Leslie's daughter. When Leslie died in 1912 Walker took over his Obeah practice and the band leadership. His wife died some years later, leaving him Leslie's extensive properties. This wealth and his facility in Obeah gave Walker an influential position in the village and helped him considerably in maintaining the local cult group. He also gained regional prestige and influence and was subsequently appointed Father, the highest rank in Pocomania, by the Shepherds who led other St. Mary bands.

As Walker grew older, however, continual denunciations of Pocomania and constant pressures toward more orthodox Christianity raised doubts in his mind about the adequacy of the cult as a religion. He developed a fear of being considered non-Christian. Deep-rooted status anxieties also tormented him, increasing his dissatisfactions. His affiliation with this low-prestige group retarded his progress toward higher status in the community, for the village elite would not accept him. Yet he believed in Pocomania and did not want to quit it. He attacked the problem, gradually and probably unconsciously, by placing increasing emphasis on the more Christian aspects of the cult and by concealing, from himself as well as from others, some of its more pagan elements. As these changes progressed and diffused to his followers, the character of the band shifted slowly from strict Pocomanism toward Zion Revivalism. As a result his regional prestige declined, for more traditionally oriented leaders began to disagree with him and to withdraw their cooperation.

Then, to allay his anxieties, Walker joined the Presbyterian church. Spurred by ambition, he worked diligently for this body and after some years attained the rank of elder. In 1945 the church officers learned with horror of his cult activities and threatened to expel him. With great reluctance he yielded to their pressures and renounced Pocomania, disbanding the local group. The consequences of this act are known to cultists throughout the island and serve to reaffirm their faith in the powers of Pocomania. The cult spirits, outraged by Walker's defection, struck him with progressive paralysis, and within three years he was completely bedridden. Medical aid and faith healers had no effect, and Walker lay close to death before his wife in desperation summoned cultists and held a great Pocomania ceremony for him. He became reconverted, the spirits relented, and he was on his feet by morning. Thoroughly chastened, and assisted by his wife and two loyal Shepherds, he reformed the local band. Meanwhile, however, many of his followers had strayed.

Although Walker has since remained faithful, sickness and old age have sapped his energy and interest, reducing his inclination and ability to attract new converts. The reconstituted band has reached only about half its former size. Plagued by a growing concern about death in addition to his other worries, Walker has continued to draw the group toward Zion Revivalism. This policy has promoted some factionalism, for his chief lieutenant, a Shepherd nicknamed Cutlass because of his sharp wit, clings to more traditional views and has won support from many of the older band members. Cutlass remains loyal, however, and the problem has not yet become serious. Walker's influence among other leaders continues to decline as he deviates further, and a few of them have severed relations with him. Nevertheless, he still commands respect from them, and despite its setback his band remains the largest and most vigorous in the area.

Most St. Mary Pocomania bands are quite small, containing from six to twelve members who live scattered about the countryside. The leader of such a group does not even attempt to hold prayer meetings, but remains content with one major ceremony a year to which he invites other bands and cultists. They in turn invite his band to their functions, and the result is a cycle of major ceremonies in different localities, most of them during the August-September holiday season, attended by cultists from all over the area. Each leader needs the cooperation of others to insure the success of his meetings and in return must cooperate with them. Only on special occasions are additional ceremonies held, and then, too, more than one band usually attends. The Orange River group alone contains enough local residents to hold regular and frequent prayer meetings, and in this sense is atypical of rural bands. Even so, Walker needs cooperation for larger ceremonies and thus must meet obligations to other leaders.

The St. Mary Pocomania configuration, then, consists of the group of bands and cultists who regularly attend each other's ceremonies. Not all groups cooperate with all others, but the network of relationships includes them all. Also, the system is not closed, for some units have at least occasional relations with outside bands, and individual cultists continually make ceremonial visits to and from other areas. Nevertheless, the boundaries are fairly definite. At the present time the configuration covers most sections of St. Mary and includes also northern St. Catherine. The cult itself extends southward to the coast, but other configurations operate below Riversdale (Fig. 6). Pocomania dies out completely in St. Ann, which is dominated by sectarians and Zion Revivalists, and there seem to be no bands in western Portland, where Convince is strong.

Small bands which have no direct, formal relations with Walker's group center at Rose Hill near the St. Ann border, at Islington in north-central St. Mary, and at Free Hill near Port Maria. Cutlass and other Orange River cultists attend their ceremonies, but the band as a unit does not. Groups at Enfield and Windsor Castle in eastern St. Mary, Belfield in the north-central area, and Gobay in northern St. Catherine cooperate more closely with Walker. Another St. Catherine band, located at Troja and led by a Shepherd nicknamed Trashy, forms a branch or subsidiary of the Orange River group. Trashy and his six followers have Walker preside at all their meetings, visit other bands with Walker's group, and participate in all but the smallest Orange River ceremonies. In addition to these groups, a number of independent Shepherds and lesser cultists, not affiliated with specific bands, live here and there about the St. Mary-St. Catherine area. They cooperate with Walker and other band leaders. Some, operating much like Bongo men, sponsor occasional ceremonies of their own.

The Orange River group extends well beyond village boundaries. It contains fifteen active members, both converted and non-converted, from the community, and about eight others from the nearby localities of Richmond, Highgate, and Zion Hill. In addition approximately a dozen local residents and half as many non-residents are fringe members --well-wishers and hangers on. All these persons, as well as the nine backsliders known to the writer, come from the lowest stratum of society. Most of them work as agricultural laborers, and few own more than a few squares of land. Only Walker and his wife have been able to rise above depressed-class status and its accompanying poverty. The resident members all belong to the old settler section of the community. Most of them live in Bongo Town and many are from families long established in this neighborhood. Except for a few backsliders, only the Walkers have been legally married. Several members cannot read or write, and Walker alone has completed primary school. Ages range from sixteen to seventy-four, with the majority being over forty. About two-thirds are women, many of them single, separated, or widowed and living without men.

Significantly, many of the females became converted shortly after traumatic experiences involving economic disasters. One woman, for example, got the spirit three months after her husband deserted her, taking their most valuable possessions and leaving her destitute. Her daughter, an intelligent girl of sixteen who had aspired to secondary education and secretarial work, had her initial trance a few months later, after she was forced to quit school in order to help support the family. Three other women, all single and living alone, were converted at the band's first meeting after a major hurricane that left their houses and fields in ruin. It seems clear that these women were motivated at least in part by the need for economic security. However, other factors cannot be discounted. The women had all lost their men and may have been searching for strong male figures upon whom to place psychological dependence. The fact that many females join the cult after being deserted strengthens this hypothesis, as does the relatively high rate of backsliders among women who find dependable husbands (cf. Mischel and Mischel, 1958: 252). Several women had quit the Orange River band after acquiring both mates and economic security. The case of the young girl indicates another possible factor in the conversion of females--the loss of hope for social betterment.

Similar factors almost certainly operate among male Pocomanians, but deep-seated emotional disturbances seem also to influence their conversion. The men of the Orange River band all grew up without fathers, either as adopted children or in households lacking men entirely, and this fact may be related to certain homosexual tendencies that appear among them. The data on these men remain inconclusive, however, and further discussion of this point must be postponed until the following chapter, when more decisive information on urban cultists will appear. Neither the male nor the female Pocomanians of Orange River exhibit marked abnormalities in their behavior. Although they vary considerably in popularity among their neighbors, most of them fit reasonably well into community life. The most deviant and disliked among them are backsliders, indicating that the band does not provide a haven for social misfits, as does the local Zion Revival group.[2]

Cult members, even more than other old settlers, tend to be distrustful and suspicious of outsiders. Perhaps because Pocomania has such low prestige, they show great reluctance to discuss their religious beliefs and activities with the uninitiated, who they seem to feel may scorn and deride them. When questioned, in fact, they frequently give deliberate misinformation or evade answering. Father Walker, fearful of being considered non-Christian, remains exceptionally secretive, particularly about necromantic matters, and tends to give sectarian interpretations of many cult patterns. These attitudes posed serious difficulties for the writer, who as a white man was especially suspect. Although he proceeded slowly, avoiding delicate points until good rapport had been established, he found it continually necessary to cross-check his informants in order to avoid errors and clear up contradictions. Even in conversations with other villagers, Pocomanians tend to exhibit this secrecy and defensiveness with regard to cult matters. Yet, their religious beliefs differ only in emphasis and terminology from those of their neighbors.

Pocomanian Ideology: The World of Spirits

The belief system of Pocomania consists primarily of an elaboration and synthesis of various ideas selected from those having general usage among the lower classes. It rests largely on the native Jamaican tradition, but includes Christian and other Western elements as well. Ideological details vary extensively, not only from band to band but also among the members of each group. In general, new members profess to know little, while more experienced officers, particularly sub-leaders, may develop ideas which conflict with those of their chiefs. Factionalism may result, as in Orange River, where the progressive views of Walker and his newer converts often clash with the more conservative opinions of Cutlass and the older members. Because of these differences, the Orange River group represents a fair proportion of the total range of Pocomanian ideological variation.

Pocomanians, like their African ancestors, take a monistic view of the world. They believe that human beings

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and spirits affect one another significantly and remain irrevocably linked within a single, unified social system. God, the creator and ruler of the universe, stands remote and aloof at the peak of this social pyramid. He has planned the universe well, and seldom has occasion to take a direct hand in its operation. Like an ideal Jamaican leader He supervises its administration and gives occasional orders, but leaves the actual work to His assistants. Pocomanians sincerely worship God and offer numerous hymns and prayers in adoration of Him, but they deal primarily with lesser, more accessible spirits who affect them directly and personally. Christ, also, remains too distant for effective interaction. In contrast to Zion Revivalists, who view Christ as a curing deity, Pocomanians believe that His work on earth is finished and that He now resides with God in Heaven (cf. Simpson, 1956: 344-5, 348-55). The Holy Ghost, on the other hand, has direct and immediate personal significance for them. He is conceived not as a distinct entity but as a spiritual principle--the activating force in all lesser spirits. In a sense He possesses Pocomanians, but always as an aspect of some lower being rather than as an independent agent. Independent sect members who claim possession by the Holy Ghost but who cannot specify the particular spirits in whose form He appears thus seem ignorant or deceitful to these cultists.

Pocomanian ideas about heavenly angels and Biblical prophets, even to the details of their individual characteristics, correspond closely with those of Zion Revivalists (see above, Chapter 6). As in the latter cult, these two classes of spirits are confused or partially equated. Such figures as Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Moses come with Gabriel, Michael, and the other angels to possess the converted at meetings, and occasionally appear to cult officers in dreams and visions. The most generally important of these beings is Joshua, who dwells in the sun and controls it. He possesses converted members at every major ceremony during a morning sun-gazing rite called the Sun Dial.[3] Father Walker and his closest followers place relatively great emphasis on these heavenly spirits and invite them to all their ceremonies. Indeed, they attempt to reserve prayer meetings for angels and to keep lesser beings away. Walker and his wife have personal guardian angels who teach them heavenly secrets. In conversations with outsiders they imply that interaction with these spirits forms the principal focus of true Revival. Cutlass and his faction disagree, however, as do other conservative Pocomanians. They concede the significance of angels and Biblical prophets, but rank them below other spirits in their interest and attention. Cutlass himself takes an extreme position, maintaining that these heavenly beings, with the exception of Joshua, are really the concern of Zion Revivalists and have relatively little importance for Pocomania. Neither clique emphasizes the communication of messages with angels as do Zion Revivalists. The heavenly beings do impart revelations, but their main function in possessing Pocomanians is to take them on spiritual journeys to the River Jordan, the Garden of Eden, Jerusalem, and other Biblical places.

Like other Jamaicans, Pocomanians believe in Satan and his fallen angels as discrete beings that have significance for living persons. However, their attitudes toward these spirits vary somewhat from the Jamaican norm. Just as they doubt the absolute goodness and incorruptibility of the heavenly angels, these cultists remain unconvinced that even Satan and his minions can be irrevocably and completely evil. Spirits to them are quite humanlike, with both strengths and weaknesses, good points and bad ones. Some have strong tendencies toward constructive or toward destructive actions, but all are capable of both. Spiritual powers remain amoral, distinct from the mind or will that directs their uses. Pocomanians accept without question the idea that Satan and his followers have malevolent propensities and cause people much trouble. Yet they maintain that these spirits, just like their heavenly cousins, can be induced to perform beneficial tasks. It is true that working with them entails danger if one does not know well how to control them, but so does dealing with basically benevolent spirits. Conservative Pocomanians like Cutlass, then, see possession by fallen angels as perfectly acceptable. Spirits like Belial, Moloch, and Lucifer himself are distinguished hardly at all from heavenly beings and come to cult ceremonies in company with Gabriel, Joshua, and other of their alleged enemies (cf. Simpson, 1956: 344-5). Cutlass himself has been possessed by Rutibel, Satan's chief assistant, although not at Orange River.

Walker and his disciples, in contrast, avoid fallen angels and take great pains to exclude them from their ceremonies. They accept the general Pocomanian beliefs about them and agree that it is often difficult to recognize them, but reason that with so many benevolent spirits available one takes needless risks in dealing with habitually malicious ones. By the same token they argue that cultists who actually encourage fallen angels probably do so for malevolent reasons. These persons, Walker maintains, are "real Pocomanians"--not true Revivalists--and he avoids relations with them. Significantly, he believes that most St. Mary cultists who do not cooperate with him are of this character, and contends that he, not they, discontinued relations. Here again, Walker's sectarian leanings and his fear of being considered non-Christian become evident. Although his attitude is extreme, it reflects general tendencies in contemporary Pocomania. Continuing sectarian influences are gradually depressing the status of fallen angels in the cult, and the practice of accusing competing bands of encouraging these malicious spirits has become quite common.[4]

Ghosts, too, are considered non-Christian beings, but Pocomanians put frank emphasis upon them. Even Walker, although he hates to admit it to outsiders, deals with duppies regularly. Indeed, Pocomania focuses so sharply upon these spirits that it may be properly termed a ghost cult. This stress seems clearly related to general Jamaican feelings and beliefs about shades of the dead. Whereas most people have purely negative attitudes toward fallen angels but show little real anxiety over them, they exhibit great apprehensiveness concerning duppies but have ambivalent feelings about them. In other words, duppies are quite important to Jamaicans, serving as causal explanations for many problems and misfortunes, yet they are not seen as wholly malevolent. Duppies reflect the characteristics of the persons from whom they derive--some are friendly, some ill-natured and spiteful, and some intermediate or variable. They may trouble their enemies, but tend not to bother friends or relatives if properly treated. Ideas about their nature and behavior vary considerably, but most people agree that duppies who wander about usually have malicious intentions. Most of them can be influenced, and one must combat the troublesome ones by enlisting the aid of others. Ghosts who come on call to Obeah Men will perform constructive and destructive tasks with equal readiness, providing they receive proper treatment and adequate payment. Pocomanians capitalize upon these beliefs and emotions, and in effect may help in keeping them alive. They conduct ceremonies to keep ghosts pacified, for example, and thus further the idea that these spirits can become dangerous. More important, they gain control of certain duppies and utilize them to counteract the ones who make trouble.

Pocomanian ghosts neither act maliciously nor wait to be called. They do come when summoned, but also attend ceremonies unbidden, often bringing friends. They possess the converted members and take them on spiritual journeys, sometimes to Biblical places but more often to other countries and cities and through unnamed cosmographical regions. Operating in much the same way as Zion Revival angels, they initiate new members into the cult, protect and train them, impart spiritual knowledge to them in dreams and visions, and invest them with offices. Cult leaders often use them in working Obeah. In return for these services the ghosts demand respectful behavior and blood sacrifices, but their main purpose seems to consist in maintaining the cult and thus assuring themselves of continued opportunities of dancing in living bodies. Most of them belonged to the cult when they were alive, and those most frequently summoned were famous Pocomania leaders or personal acquaintances of their devotees. Father Walker, for example, works with the former leaders of the Orange River band, his present wife becomes possessed by the duppy of his first wife, and Cutlass is a devotee of the St. Catherine Father who first trained him. Thus, although it is organized on a non-kinship basis, Pocomania has many characteristics of an ancestral cult.

Water spirits also have significance for Pocomanians. The females, called "water maids" or "river maids," look and act much like European mermaids and are by far the most numerous, but occasional males also occur.[5] According to Jamaicans these spirits inhabit deep pools in streams and rivers, and probably live also in the ocean. They do not normally molest people, but sometimes kidnap or drown persons who invade their privacy and disturb them. Like duppies, water spirits attend Pocomania meetings and select certain members--again usually females--to become their devotees. They have the same importance for these members as ghosts have for others.[6] They are rough, dangerous spirits who sometimes hurt their partners and often require considerable pacification, but they serve essential functions for the band. Pocomanians in their spiritual journeys cannot traverse cosmographic bodies of water without their help. One sometimes hears of other nature spirits, for example forest sprites, who possess an occasional Pocomanian, but these have little significance for the cult or for the Orange River band.

Pocomanians, then, concern themselves mainly with ghosts, water spirits, and to a lesser extent with angels. They conceive of these beings as integral members of the cult, and they organize their bands and ceremonies in terms of interrelationships with them. Specifically, the spirits act as superordinate beings who with the assistance and cooperation of the band leader decide ceremonial formats and schedules, govern the religious behavior of members, and determine the structure of the group. In actual practice it is the leader who dictates band policies, but he does so in the belief that he is obeying the spirits, accurately interpreting their orders and anticipating their wishes, and in general serving their best interests. Thus Walker, although he would like to deal exclusively with heavenly angels, feels that he must also serve ghosts, and in so doing he preserves the essentially Pocomanian nature of his organization. Beliefs in supernatural beings--and thus in effect the beings themselves--do, then, have significant effects upon the ritual and structural features of the cult.

Organization of the Pocomania Band

Pocomania groups vary somewhat in their organizational details, but all conform to the same structural principles. In broad outline they resemble Zion Revival bands, typically having strong leaders, several categories of converted officers, converted members without specialized statuses, nonconverted or temporal functionaries, and various hangers on. In its local organization the Orange River band is representative of rural groups, although somewhat larger and more complex than most. It holds independent prayer meetings, but for larger ceremonies must, like smaller units, operate in conjunction with other bands.

A number of well-wishers who participate regularly in local meetings may be considered fringe members of the Orange River group. Certain of them, mostly landless, unemployed, single men, have more interest in Walker than in the band itself. They run errands and do odd chores for him in exchange for occasional paying jobs and handouts of food, money, and rum. Others have genuine appreciation for the cult and enjoy participating in band activities. Both kinds of helpers take care of minor tasks that arise during ceremonies, assist the regular members when needed, and substitute for official non-converted functionaries when the latter are absent. Some of them, mostly women, hope some day to become converted; others have no such intentions. Those who have sincere attachments for the cult--even some who belong to other religious bodies--often accept permanent temporal positions in the band.

Non-converted members assume regular ceremonial duties and receive official statuses involving specific privileges. They handle jobs which are essential to the proper functioning of the band but incidental to its main goals. One is the Nurse, a woman who desires conversion but cannot get the spirit. She ministers to the converts at ceremonies, seeing that they do not hurt themselves, helping them don their uniforms, serving them water, and generally keeping them in good laboring condition. At large ceremonies she has unofficial helpers. She normally does not tend the top officials of the band, who have personal attendants termed Armor Bearers. A young man who also doubles as drummer serves Walker, while the wives of his two Shepherds bear their husband's arms. Walker's wife, the band's Mother, is cared for by her sister.

A young girl is the official Bible Reader, a position which some bands designate Bible Mother or Pilot. She delivers scriptural selections at ceremonies, traces hymns (reads each line to the singers as they reach it), and sometimes aids the Nurse. Another important functionary, the Cymbal Man, has the exacting task of "blowing the cymbals," or singing the special songs that set the rhythm and tempo of laboring. Walker took great care in choosing and training this officer, who needs a good singing voice, a fine sense of rhythm, and a large repertoire of songs. The Cymbal Man has to gauge accurately the optimum tempo for each phase of the laboring, a duty which requires the balancing of several factors. In general the pace should be fast enough to satisfy the spirits and keep the members at the proper level of trance, yet slow enough to conserve their energies and prevent premature fatigue. The demands change with different spirits, at various stages of the ceremony, and under diverse spiritual conditions.

The Orange River band has two drummers to announce meetings and accompany the choruses, or non-spiritual songs. In this the group reflects Walker's Zion Revivalistic tendencies and is almost unique, for most Pocomanians do not use musical instruments. Some bands have other temporal officers, for example Flag Bearers, or lack official Nurses or Bible Readers. Each group has its own constellation of such functionaries. Leaders without trained Cymbal Men usually "blow the cymbals" themselves.

Temporal officers, however important, are merely auxiliary, and subsidiary to converted functionaries. Pocomania shows its greatest distinctiveness in the spiritual aspects of organization and ritual. As in Zion Revival the attainment of higher offices, like conversion and full membership, depends upon the spirits. Whereas Zion Revivalists need relatively little specialization to communicate with angels, however, Pocomanians require various highly trained functionaries to solve the diverse problems encountered in making their long spiritual journeys. Ghosts and water spirits teach and train these specialists, but angels may provide supplementary instruction. Walker and his followers claim that the latter give them spiritual secrets unknown to "ground spirits," but like stricter Pocomanians they get their basic grounding from duppies. It is not clear whether the ghosts are the actual specialists whose devotees merely symbolize their functions, or whether they need the help of trained persons in order to make the trips. Pocomanian conceptions of possession do not reach this degree of precision. The duppies clearly enjoy the excursions, however, and take great pains to prepare their devotees. They apparently like long journeys, for they continually drill their partners to achieve more mileage and thus higher rank.

The ghost who decides to join these tours first selects a likely companion. He may choose anyone, but in practice almost always picks a non-converted member or a well-wisher of the cult. Pocomanians claim that the ghosts often choose scoffers and trouble makers in order to maintain the respect of spectators. Indeed, Walker himself became converted while mocking Pocomanian antics. The ghost must choose carefully, however, for some persons have no "talent" for spiritual activities and can never become good specialists. The prospective devotee sometimes proves incompatible, in which case the ghost possesses him only once or twice and then gives up. Initial possession, which almost always occurs during ceremonies, resembles that of Zion Revivalists but is usually more violent.

The duppy strikes his victim on the forehead, knocking him over backwards, or else pitches him forward onto his face with a blow on the nape of the neck. The initiate writhes and rolls about on the ground, grunting and moaning, kicking his feet, and thrashing his arms. Helpers see that he does not hurt himself, but do not otherwise interfere. At intervals he may lie quietly and groan (overbreathe). He remains in this condition for at least several hours. When the spirit becomes settled and the initiate seems controllable, the leaders help him stand up and labor with the band. Finally the victim becomes exhausted and the ghost satisfied. The band leader then seats him in a chair and "bails him out" of spirit by rubbing his temples, saying prayers, and reciting psalms over him. The initiate emerges from the trance dazed and bewildered, tired and sore from his exertions, dizzy, and usually with a headache. He remembers nothing, but may feel the effects for days and seldom likes the experience. As he undergoes additional trances and becomes used to the feeling, he comes to enjoy it, however, and later encourages possession by dancing with the band.

The new convert is a "common soldier" or "worker." He knows little or nothing about his spirit and does not remember his trances. He travels with the band, but cannot go far and must turn back at the first obstacle. Gradually, however, he "develops in the work," and if he has talent soon begins to see his spirit laboring before him. The ghost teaches him about spiritual matters and trains him to be increasingly proficient in laboring and traveling. He learns to enlist the aid of other members to surmount spiritual obstacles and dangers so that he can attain more mileage. Then the spirit teaches him the rudiments of the special office--the "portion of work" or "post"--that he will later occupy.

As the convert's proficiency increases, the portion toward which he is moving becomes clear to the band leader, who can then supplement the duppy's training by pointing out errors and weaknesses in his work. The leader also interprets the symbolic suggestions that the ghost gives the worker in visions. When the convert becomes adept at the behavioral actions and the spiritual functions of his specialty he is ready for his portion. To inform him the duppy appears in a dream, clad in a uniform and showing a table laden with fruits, flowers, and other objects. He must acquire a uniform exactly like the spirit's and then hold a ceremony involving a table like that shown him. The leader may anticipate the ghost's decision if no dream occurs, and usually helps finance the ceremony, which in either case must be held to validate the new portion. Until he completes it the convert remains an "acting" officer without full status as a specialist.

Each Pocomania portion involves distinctive symbolic actions and has specific functions for the traveling band. Some officers guide the group or help it past obstacles, others discover or combat evil spirits, and yet others add various points of interest to the tours. Any given band contains only a few specialists, and thus cannot travel far by itself. Despite Walker's recent negligence in assigning portions, his band includes examples of the most common and important ones. Cooperating bands contain others.

Probably the most popular portion is that of Water Maid. Possessed by a water spirit, she goes into action whenever the band reaches one of her "stations"--a river, lake, or pond. Spiritually she helps the group across this barrier and protects it from any hostile spirits that lurk there. Her physical actions symbolize these functions. She performs a complex, rather erotic dance, executing complicated steps, swaying her hips, and gesturing with arms and hands. She always demands water in which to work, and prefers a pool to roll and splash in. If none is available, helpers must pour water on her lest her spirit become angry and "cramp" her or give her convulsions. The pool in Orange River, like those of most rural bands, consists simply of a hole dug in the corner of the ceremonial grounds.

Although portions are not formally ranked the Maid, because her work is so dangerous and showy, has great popularity and thus in effect higher status than most other officers. Every respectable band contains a Maid, and the Orange River group has two, one of them a Diving Maid who specializes in deep water and bottom-dwelling spirits. She behaves distinctively, dancing while bent almost double at the waist. Also, Shepherd Trashy, who leads Walker's St. Catherine branch, has a water spirit and performs Maid functions. Such Water Men are relatively uncommon and have neither the prestige nor the color of their sisters. It is the female of the species, with her esoteric gyrations and erotic dances, who draws the large crowds to Pocomania ceremonies. Curiously, she also contributes to the cult's low prestige, for critics point her out as the horrible example who rolls about on the ground and gets covered with mud.

A male officer, the Hunter, also has great popularity and importance in the cult. He hunts out and destroys evil spirits and other forms of destruction that threaten the safety of the traveling band. His station is the forest, but he operates in other environments as well. The observer sees him running around the circle of laborers, bent over double, thrashing his arms, and grappling vigorously with unseen beings. His spirit apparently has canine characteristics, for he often growls and barks while in action. He functions physically to keep spectators at their distance, giving the converts room to labor. He also clears paths through the circle of onlookers to aid the coming and going of spirits. The bystanders cooperate eagerly, for whoever blocks such an aisle and collides with a passing ghost will be knocked down and very likely converted. The local band contains no Hunters, although one young worker shows possibilities. Trashy's Hunter performs the job at large ceremonies, while Walker himself or Cutlass, both of whom are former Hunters, fill the gap at smaller meetings.

The functions of several other officers supplement and overlap those of the Hunter. The local band has a Searcher, who inspects the group to seek out destructive influences that have penetrated the outer defenses. He dashes here and there among the laborers, searching intently among their legs, and reports his findings to Walker or Cutlass. One of the latter then eliminates the destruction, or if a visiting Cutter is present assigns him the task of "cutting and clearing" it away. Bands that attend Orange River ceremonies contain Ramblers, who guide the travelers through jungles and forests; Warriors, who fight evil spirits on plains and deserts; and Spyers, who climb hills and mountains to see what lies ahead. The latter detect distant enemy forces, look for promising routes and interesting places to visit, and sometimes discern messages from afar. Physically they look through imaginary spyglasses and then report their findings in tongues to their leaders. An independent cultist who often visits Orange River is an Ax Man, who clears away undergrowth in forests, using an invisible ax and making appropriate vocal noises. Another, who calls himself a Band Actor, seems to have no useful function but lends color to ceremonies. All these officers, and others, help to attract spectators to Pocomania ceremonies and thus contribute to the cult's survival.

Talented and experienced portion holders, if they receive additional training from spirits and leaders, may advance to still higher positions--first to acting and then to Crowned Shepherd or Governess. Exceptionally apt persons occasionally rise further yet, to Father or Mother. Such persons retain their original spirits and special skills, but take on new functions and may acquire new duppies. They receive new, more striking uniforms and learn dances which involve rapid and sustained whirling or spinning. Their new roles include both the coordination of spiritual activties on journeys and the supervision of physical operations at ceremonies. The Governess ranks somewhat lower than the Shepherd, assisting the Mother but otherwise acting simply as an important portion holder. If the band lacks a Mother the Governess substitutes for her and may eventually attain her rank. The Crowned Mother, the highest female officer in the cult, has authority over all band members but deals mainly with the women. The Orange River Mother, Walker's wife, sometimes takes charge of ceremonies. Crowned Mothers may lead bands, but normally rank second to male leaders.

The Shepherd may stand higher or lower than.the Mother, depending upon his relative ability and experience. All Crowned Shepherds are officially qualified to lead bands, and most bands are led by them, but many cannot or do not do so. Some operate independently like Bongo Men, while others, like Cutlass and Trashy, act as assistants to stronger figures or lead subsidiary bands. The influential Shepherd who maintains such assistants and sub-bands becomes an acting Father, and may ultimately receive a crown from other high-ranking leaders. To achieve the post of Crowned Father, the highest in the rural cult, he must demonstrate superior ability and knowledge by managing consistently successful and outstanding ceremonies.

Ceremonial Patterns

Like Zion Revivalists, Pocomanians hold most of their ceremonies in the yards of their leaders, which are surrounded by high fences to keep out the idly curious. Most Shepherds build temporary booths for shelter, but Walker, imitating the sectarians, has a permanent, wattle and thatch camp. The Seal, or consecrated area, occupies the center of the yard and forms the focus of the rites. A small altar made of a box or board nailed to a post sometimes marks the Seal or stands at a side of the yard. It usually has plants growing at its base and during ceremonies holds candles, glasses of water, cut flowers, and a cross. It attracts and houses cult spirits, and is often absent in yards containing graves. One other permanent item, a pool for the Water Maid, may occupy a corner of the grounds.

The small prayer meetings held most Sunday evenings in Orange River require little additional equipment. Walker hangs a lantern and places on the Seal a small table holding a Bible, a hymnal, some flowers, and a glass of water. The members gather at dusk, and accompanied by the drums sing choruses to announce the meeting. They seldom attract more than a few well-wishers, and after an hour or so begin to sing hymns and offer individual prayers. Walker then reads and interprets the Bible, occasionally calling for more hymns, after which there may be recreational singing and dancing. If many members attend and feel enthusiastic they call the angels and take brief trips to the Holy Land, behaving on these occasions much like Zion Revivalists. Ghosts may sneak into particularly large prayer meetings, usually at the instigation of Cutlass and Trashy, but only rarely and without Walker's full approval. They normally wait for more exciting events.

Major ceremonies, termed Tables after the long, colorfully decorated tables which stand on the Seal and form the center of the rites, range from extended prayer meetings to elaborate affairs lasting three or four days. Held for specific purposes, they vary in detail but follow generally similar procedures. The most/common type, Thanksgiving Tables, show appreciation to the spirits for services rendered. Shepherds, band members, and occasionally well-wishers hold them after recovering from very serious illnesses or succeeding in major economic ventures. The annual ceremonies of band leaders are the most elaborate Tables of this type. Designed to thank the band's duppies for their support during the year and to satisfy their demands for compensation, such affairs include animal sacrifices and feasts in addition to the regular rites.

Uplifting Tables are held to validate new portions and occasionally to enlist spiritual aid in overcoming chronic sickness, bad luck, or other troubles. Crowning Tables for the appointment of high cult officers constitute more elaborate variants of this type. Also, Walker used to hold small Uplifting Tables for destitute members, giving them the gate receipts. For these the band would travel to districts lacking Pocomania, where because of their novelty even minor ceremonies draw large crowds and make money. Indeed, some bands go about like traveling minstrel groups, putting on shows in various districts and "uplifting" entire areas. The proceeds, which they divide with the well-wishers in whose yards they perform, are of course purely incidental.

Three or six months after the death of a leader his successor usually makes a Mourning Table for him. Some Shepherds hold similar ceremonies for deceased portion holders or aid the bereaved relatives in doing so. Mourning Tables may simply honor the dead members, but more often have the purpose of pacifying their ghosts and inviting them to join the cult. When the latter is the case the Shepherd places a piece of the deceased's clothing in a prominent position on the table and calls his duppy to attend the ceremony. Ghosts of cult leaders invariably comply. Successors to high-ranking Pocomania figures sometimes hold additional ceremonies, called Memorial Tables, one, two, and three years after their deaths. These may develop over time into annual Thanksgiving Tables with sacrifices, particularly if the Shepherd making them uses the honored ghost for Obeah.

Special Obeah or Curing Tables are sometimes necessary to mobilize the spirits of the band in especially difficult Obeah cases. They proceed much like other ceremonies, but involve secret blood sacrifices and magical rites in addition to the public events. Few spectators attend them, and those who do act fearful, refusing even to partake of the free food. They can never be sure the ceremony is not a Destruction Table which might harm them.[8]

A major Table of any type entails weeks of preparation and considerable expense. The Shepherd must schedule it well in advance and must send formal invitations to prospective guests. It may take him and his followers months to save enough money to buy the necessary ritual objects and materials and the provisions for visitors.[9] Final preparations such as purchasing perishable items, building the booth, and cleaning the house and grounds occur a day or two before the ceremony.

The Table begins on Sunday evening, but guests sometimes come early. Each group stops at the gate and announces its arrival with a whistle signal. The host or his representative goes to greet them and guide them in, while those already present sing a welcoming chorus. The visitors march into the yard in single file, the leader first, singing a hymn. They circle the Seal three times and then offer individual prayers thanking God for a safe journey and asking Him to bless the host and his ceremony. The assembly sings a hymn or chorus after each prayer. The leader of the newly arrived group makes a short, formal speech, introducing himself and saying how happy he is to aid the host. The newcomers then break ranks and mingle with the others, visiting with friends, singing choruses, and sometimes dancing. The host invites the leaders into the house and serves them rum, a ritual which he repeats at intervals throughout the ceremony. On each occasion they bring one or two followers with them, so that all members receive their shares. Some Shepherds hold ganja-smoking rites of a similar nature, but Walker frowns on this practice. The female members of the home band, led by the Mother, serve the visitors food several times each day.

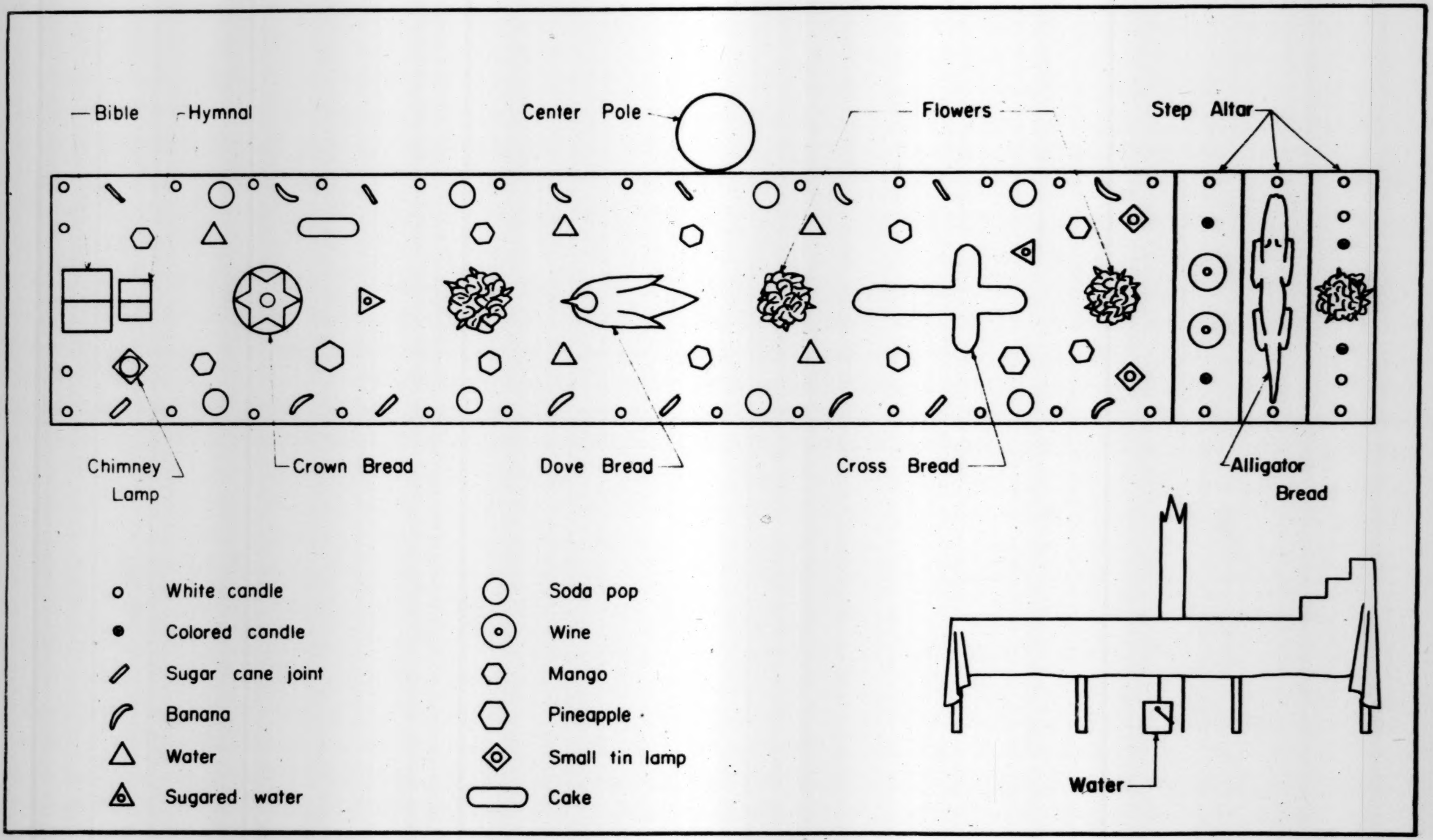
On Sunday afternoon the host band prepares the table, which is basically a rough wooden structure two or three feet wide and from six to twenty feet in length, sometimes with a step-altar of stacked boxes at the head. They cover it with white tablecloths, adding black trimming for Mourning Tables and red for Obeah. Then, closely supervised by their Shepherd, they arrange the ritual objects. Vases of flowers and leaves occupy the central portion together with loaves of bread fashioned to resemble such figures as crowns, crosses, doves, and alligators, all resting atop water glasses and covered with napkins. Disposed about them are fruits like mangoes, papayas, pineapples and bananas; sections of sugar cane; glasses of water, sugared water and milk covered with saucers; small tin lamps; bottles of soda pop and wine;

and so forth. Rice, kernels of roasted corn, or small pieces of coconut meat may be scattered about. Dozens of white candles and occasional colored ones stand evenly spaced around the table's edge, and a Bible and a hymnal lie ready at its foot (Fig. 5).

Most Pocomanians agree that the white cloth stands for purity, white candles for the "light of Christianity," and black objects for mourning. They agree also that leaves, flowers, and water draw spirits and that pumpkins and jackfruits may indicate Destruction Tables. Apart from a few such points, however, little accord concerning the symbolic referents of objects or even about whether they have symbolic significance obtains among the different bands. Pocomanians appear to keep such subjects purposely vague, so that Shepherds can interpret them freely in their speeches. The symbolism changes, that is, as cult leaders get new ideas.[10]

At small ceremonies the cult officers do not don their uniforms until possessed and commanded to do so by their spirits. Major Tables, however, begin with full dress processions. The host announces the parade shortly before dusk, and the members enter the house a few at a time to get ready. Those not occupied sing choruses in the yard. Women, men, and high cult officers dress in separate rooms or at different times, aided by Nurses or Armor Bearers. Some members have quite simple uniforms, for example only belts or sashes, and can dress rapidly. Others, who wear

Fig. 5. Plan of a Pocomania Ceremonial Table.


Bible
Hymnal
Center Pole
Flowers
Step Altar
Chimney Lamp
Crown Bread
Dove Bread
Cross Bread
Alligator Bread
Water
○ White candle
● Colored candle
Sugar cane joint
Banana
△ Water
Sugared water
◯ Soda pop
◎ Wine
⬡ Mango
⬡ Pineapple
◈ Small tin lamp
Cake

special shirts, dresses, or headgear must take more time. Cult leaders often have elaborate ceremonial clothing and in dressing have to perform various complicated rituals. Many Mothers, for example, wear highly complex turbans containing yards of different colored materials, which must be wrapped and tied in precisely prescribed ways. Shepherds often use special ceremonial underclothing as well as their long, colorful gowns and their wigs and headdresses. Many cultists apply face and body powders, and some wear beads, anklets, charms, or other jewelry. Mothers often stick pencils in their turbans and hang scissors, knives, whistles, or other symbolic equipment from their belts. Each member's spirit has specified precisely each item and the way in which it must be worn.

When all are ready they gather around the table, where the host offers a prayer, leads a hymn, and tells them the marching plan. He deploys them, has assistants give them flowers and lighted candles to carry, strikes up a marching hymn, and leads them out to the road. The procession presents a striking picture as the members parade about the rural roads in full voice with banners flying, but it has practical functions as well. It announces that the ceremony will soon start, and its pageantry, promising more interesting events to come, induces many villagers to attend. Moreover, it enables helpers to clear the yard of bystanders and station a gate keeper to collect the threepence admission fees from non-members.

Returning after perhaps half an hour, the paraders file into the ceremonial grounds and march counterclockwise around the Seal, still singing hymns and choruses. The host offers a long prayer asking God for his protection and blessings and imploring Him to accept their devotions. The assembly then sings a hymn or chorus, another Shepherd offers a prayer, and the procedure is repeated until all members have had their turns. After leading the Lord's Prayer and giving a benediction, the host makes a speech explaining the purpose of the Table and announcing future scheduled events. A period of singing and dancing follows, interspersed with speeches and Bible readings. The hymns come from Sankey's collection; most of the Bible readings from the Old Testament. Pocomania choruses are many and varied, many of them religious songs like those of Zion Revivalists but others of unique character.[11]

The extent of spiritualistic activity during this phase of the ceremony varies considerably. Some groups do not specifically call the spirits at this time, but labor if they happen to come. Others, among them Walker's band, sing the slow, dirge-like long-meter hymns to summon angels, reserving this period specifically for trips to the Holy Land. When possessed by the heavenly spirits, the members labor in much the same manner as Zion Revivalists. They go into trance easily, groan in complicated rhythm patterns, exhibit little specialized activity, and come out of spirit without trouble. One gets the impression that they form a group of tourists on a sight-seeing expedition--the portion-holders have no particular responsibilities and do not really make much effort to contribute to the group's progress. They talk tongues occasionally and some of them do short dances, but mainly they simply stand around in the circle and labor.

This phase of the ceremony ends some time before midnight, and the presiding Shepherd makes another speech. Informing the spectators that the bands cannot labor in darkness, he invites them to light the candles on the table for threepence each. The act is well worth the expense, for it brings general "upliftment" to the performer. A leader stands at each side of the table, begging, shaming, and cajoling the onlookers to light the candles, while members dance slowly around singing a special song such as:

> All those people that in the dark,
> They cannot agree with the candle light.

While people pay their money and light their candles, Shepherds dance innocently by and snuff some of them out again. Some must be lit three or four times,but finally all are burning and the ceremony proceeds.

If the Table involves special rituals such as examination or appointment of new officers or eulogies to the dead, they take place at this point. Then, after more hymns, scripture reading, speeches, and dancing, the members make ready to "break the table." The host announces this event and the members say grace. Two leaders break one of the ceremonial breads across the table and then hand out small pieces to the participants. Other leaders do the same with the remaining loaves, and the members divide the other food among themselves and eat it. Then, after another grace and perhaps a hymn and psalm reading, they prepare to call the ghosts.

Duppies, like angels, come to meetings in response to flowers, water, and long-meter hymns. Sugared water and rum also draw them. In addition each cult leader has a chant to call his duppies and those of his followers. At this point each leader in turn stands at the head of the table to sound this chant, or "blow his note." Some call their ghosts in tongues, others in English, and still others with Catholic liturgies or stereotyped Protestant prayers. All include the names of duppies and many long "ohhhh's."[12] While they chant lesser cultists dance slowly around the table singing or humming in low voices. The duppies usually come quickly.

Suddenly a convert starts violently, exclaims "yip yip" or "oi," and staggers back into the arms of onlookers or forward across the yard as if he has been given a forcible shove. Nurses jump to catch him before he can fall or knock over the table. He leans on them, eyes closed, body jerking and shuddering, and may groan spasmodically or mutter greetings like "how-de-do," "morning Sir," or "salaam." Often he struggles to spin out of the Nurse's grasp. Soon he begins to labor, groaning in a steady, single-beat rhythm while bending over and stamping with one foot at each expulsion of breath. According to informants the initial shock renders even the hardened convert insensible, but he quickly recovers, feeling nervous and skittish. Everything is blurred and wavery, and objects look small and distant. A bouyant sensation replaces the nervousness and the spirit appears, making precisely the same movements as his devotee. Converts infer from this vision that the duppy is now "behind the eyes."

Meanwhile ghosts are "hitting" other cultists, and for a time confusion reigns. Possessed persons stagger about, Nurses and Armor Bearers hurry to catch them, and spectators scramble out of the way. The converts are then led into a circle, where they adjust their groaning tempos and begin to labor in unison, starting their journey. Not all members fall in spirit at once, and none make the entire trip. One by one, after the first hour or so, they leave the circle and are "bailed out" of trance by helpers. Others fall in spirit at intervals and join the band wherever it happens to be. Few converts can labor continuously for more than two or three hours, but the group as a whole may travel without stopping for half a day.

The band starts off slowly to the accompaniment of choruses sung in cymbal time by onlookers. A Shepherd or Mother who is not in spirit takes charge, watching over the travelers and giving instructions to assistants. A duppy sometimes calls for a psalm, whereupon the singing stops and the Bible Reader renders it. Other spirits ask for water, give messages in tongues, and demand specific hymns. Shepherds and Governesses occasionally spin out of the circle and go whirling around the yard, and some portion-holders perform their acts. It takes time for the band to warm up, however. Like Zion Revivalists, they progress to successively higher "orders," or stages of intensity. Pocomanians conceptualize these "orders" as legs of the journey. Each adds more mileage and involves new heights of spiritual experience. Laboring ceases at the end of each order, and the members wander about dazedly, muttering and grunting while old spirits leave and new ones possess them. They begin the next order with renewed vigor and a new laboring tempo. Choruses and hymns sung in cymbal time accompany some orders, but later the special cymbal songs become more frequent. The Cymbal Man often extemporizes the lyrics and sings some cymbals in tongues.[13]

As the band reaches higher orders and moves deeper into spiritual country, it passes through the different stations and exhibits more varied action. The personal duppies of portion-holders possess them and make them perform their specialties. As they enter the forest the Hunter, usually wearing a red shirt and turban, pulls out of the circle. He dashes around the band barking, growling, and hunting out destruction, attacks unseen evil spirits, and chases spectators out of the way. Then the Rambler may go running up and down the yard scouting or carrying messages. Should the band meet hostile forces, warriors fight them off with imaginary swords and spears. The Ax Man chops down trees that block the path. In hill country the Spyer stands up and peers through his glass. The Searcher checks the band for evil spirits at intervals, and the Cutter clears them away with a spiritual cutlass.

Shepherds and Governesses, wearing long flaring gowns of brilliantly colored materials, whirl for almost unbelievably long periods. The writer clocked Cutlass at nearly twenty minutes of slow wheeling and Trashy, who spins rapidly, at over five. These high ranking officers keep order among the travelers and occasionally perform special duties.[14] High points of laboring come when the band encounters rivers and lakes. Then the Maid, usually wearing a blue and white dress, goes into her act. She postures and dances, calls for water, and then slides to the ground. There she scuttles about, occasionally fighting with evil spirits, until she rolls into her pool. Clothes and all, she happily splashes in it, throwing water about and dancing on her knees. The laborers circle her and urge her on. She gets extremely muddy, and after her dance must be led off for a change of clothing. Some Maids use four or five uniforms during a single Table.

Angels may invade certain orders, in which case the duppies must leave. The band then labors Zion Revival style, replacing their simple groaning pattern with more complex rhythms, using different cymbals, and emphasizing verbal activities. The angels stay for an order or two and transmit messages, then the duppies return to continue the journey. The band may labor all night in this way, with some members dropping out at intervals and others falling in spirit to join the group. Nurses must take tired members, seat them in chairs, and press or rub their temples to "bail them out," for duppies do not leave voluntarily. Especially tenacious ghosts must be extricated with psalms and prayers by leaders. After emerging from trance, the member recites the 23rd Psalm, rests a bit, and visits. Then he may go into the house to drink rum or smoke ganja or to take a nap. Rested and refreshed, he later rejoins the crowd and helps the Shepherds or Nurses until the spirit strikes him again.

Unless intense laboring persists, the leaders usually call a recess shortly before dawn and bail out the laborers. After reciting prayers and singing a hymn, everyone rests, has breakfast, and makes ready to perform the Sun Dial. This rite ideally begins at sunrise and lasts until noon, but sometimes starts and ends late. It consists of a different type of laboring. The members bring on trances by lively singing and dancing and then labor in a line rather than in a circle. All face the sun and gaze at it, while Joshua, its ruler and resident, possesses them. Some converts claim to discern messages written or pictured by him on the sun's surface. The gazing stops when the sun rises high, but laboring continues at least until noon. Members sometimes put their arms around one another and dance back and forth across the yard, guided by leaders not in spirit. They rest frequently and consume gallons of water, for the Jamaican day gets quite hot. Nurses keep busy with towels wiping off their perspiration, and leaders watch constantly to prevent over-exhaustion. Many drop out. Finally, when all become fatigued, the leaders bring the Sun Dial to a close and bail out the participants. More prayers and hymns follow, after which the members rest, eat lunch, and perhaps take naps.

The Sun Dial may conclude the formal ceremony. If so, the guests take leave of their friends, collect their fares from the host, and after delivering final prayers and hymns at the Seal leave to catch their buses home. Most major Tables include sacrificial rituals and formal dinners, however, which normally take place late Monday afternoon and are sometimes followed by additional spontaneous laboring. Occasionally, at very large ceremonies, these final rites are postponed until Tuesday morning.

The sacrificial animal is always a male and almost always a goat. At very large ceremonies the host may kill a second goat, a pig, or a sheep, and perhaps two or three chickens. To open the ritual he leads the beast into the yard and around the Seal several times while the company sings hymns. He then sprinkles the victim with rum, recites the Lord's Prayer, and has the "sacrifice psalm" read. Walker uses Psalm 65, but others prefer Psalm 6, Psalm 50, or Hebrews 8. During another hymn, a Shepherd chops off the animal's head with a single stroke of a sharp cutlass, and a Mother catches some of the blood in a large bowl. Each cultist runs up and puts a finger to the spurting artery and then tastes it. Some, excited by this dramatic rite, fall in spirit and labor on the bloody ground. Helpers drag the carcass away and dress it. The host mixes some rum with the blood in the bowl and marks a cross on the forehead of each member and of as many onlookers as will allow it. The converts may continue laboring for a time, but finally calm down, are bailed out, and wait patiently for the feast.[15]

The dinner usually consists of curried goat meat and rice cooked without salt. Some cultists add yams or green bananas. Women may prepare the rice and other starchy foods but may not handle the meat unless they have passed the menopause. The cook, usually a non-member hired for the event, butchers the animal and curries it, saving out pieces of the heart, liver, thigh, and kidney. The host takes these delicacies and prepares them secretly along with rice and other foods to feed his ghosts. He cooks this food in small pots over a special fire, and after the guests have left he takes it with rum and blood to the graves where his spirits live.

Performing secret rites consisting mostly of chants and prayers, he leaves a dinner and a lighted candle for each ghost and sometimes a larger, communal meal for visiting duppies.

While the dinner cooks, helpers clean the ceremonial area, gather and split banana leaves to use as plates, and collect palm boughs for seats. They arrange the boughs and leaves in a rectangle around the Seal, and when all is ready the members take their places. Shepherds dish out the rice and goat meat, the host offers a prayer, and after saying grace the cultists begin eating. Leaders walk around choosing small portions from the plate of each cultist, and the highest officers may eat in the house. Participants use only their fingers as tools. They must clean up all their food and may not crack the bones. When all finish they say another grace and sing a hymn. The host gives a final prayer and a benediction, and the festivities end. Members wash their hands in a bucket of water, and after visiting awhile collect their fares from the host, perform their ritual leave-taking, and depart for home. Some may remain and labor informally for a few hours, leaving the next morning.

Not all Tables follow precisely the plan described above, for each band evolves its own variations on the basic Pocomania themes. Most approximate the one discussed, however, although many are smaller and some larger. Few proceed as smoothly as indicated. Heated discussions concerning procedural details often occur among leaders, and incipient fights sometimes break out among different bands. Visitors grumble about the poor treatment they receive, and hosts complain that their guests labor poorly. Usually, however, one gets the impression that this grumbling is mostly formal and that the participants leave well satisfied with the affair. Onlookers, too, derive great satisfaction from such ceremonies, and may talk about them for weeks. The presiding Shepherd takes credit for successful Tables, of course, but he also assumes the blame for failures.

Band Leadership and Regional Prestige

To gain prestige in Pocomania the Shepherd must organize and conduct consistently successful ceremonies--affairs that attract sizeable paying audiences, proceed without disruptive incidents, and provide gratifications for both participants and spectators. Such events require the cooperation of many cultists and involve problems which the host finds quite difficult to solve by himself. The independent Shepherd, being alone, can seldom meet consistently the conditions necessary for ceremonial success. First, he needs considerable capital to buy ritual supplies and provide food, rum, and transportation for visiting participants, and he has no followers to help bear the expense. In fact, he needs even more money than the band Shepherd, for he has no nucleus of laborers and so must invite and provide for more guests. Secondly, he is expected to repay in full the services rendered by visitors, an arduous task for one person. A band of ten converts, for example, contributes ten units of spiritual labor to his Table, and he must attend ten of their ceremonies to reciprocate. In actuality he may owe them less, for his labor may have more value than that of any one band member, but the principle of equality applies. Finally, having no trained and disciplined followers to set the laboring pattern and the policy of obeying his orders, he may have trouble keeping order and controlling the participants. Cultists from various bands, working differently and used to different kinds of commands, may clash and become confused. Should a visiting leader have to take over and restore discipline, the host's prestige would suffer. Independent Pocomanians, then, are rarely able to attain really high status in the cult.

The band leader can more easily manage successful ceremonies, and to this extent the larger his group the better are his chances of gaining fame and respect. The reverse is true as well; renowned figures can more easily gain new followers than can relative nonentities. Also, larger bands can hold larger ceremonies, attract greater numbers of potential converts, and thus more readily maintain themselves. The band leader does not, however, acquire his status advantages without cost, for he assumes many responsibilities. He must teach his followers the subtleties of Pocomania, drill them in cult etiquette and discipline, and train them in the performance of their particular roles and duties. He should prepare them well, for his reputation depends in part upon their conduct and will suffer if they display ignorance or improper behavior. If, for example, they disrupt the ceremonies of other bands the latter will reciprocate. The Shepherd who shirks the responsibilities of band leadership fares no better than the one without followers and gets even less cooperation from his colleagues.

The Shepherd's obligations increase with the number of followers that he must train and control. Pocomanians recognize the difficulties involved in maintaining large groups of "children" and accord correspondingly more respect to those who can do so.[16] As the head of the biggest band in St. Mary, then, Walker has advantages over other leaders but at the same time faces more harassing problems. The fact that he took over an initially large group may help to explain his continued success, but his management of members is important as well. The spacial distribution of his followers also has significance. As mentioned above, most rural groups have widely dispersed memberships, a condition which limits the extent of interaction between Shepherds and their flocks. The Orange River band, in contrast, includes a large nucleus of local residents with whom Walker can maintain almost daily contact. This simplifies his task considerably, although it implies a more constant and demanding charge than other leaders assume. The fact should be noted, however, that Walker's role differs mainly in degree, not in kind, from those of his colleagues.

Walker is quite authoritarian in governing his band. He not only exacts strict discipline from his followers, but also requires them to contribute food, labor, and money to him for ceremonies and other band projects. In return he assumes secular as well as religious obligations. He accepts partial responsibility for the economic, physical, and emotional welfare of every band member. They can beg or borrow food and money from him when they need it, consult him on economic and legal problems, and obtain free of charge his services as an Obeah Man. He gives freely of his time and counsel and his advice is usually good, for he must merit their trust and confidence. He operates a pardner to help them save money, and a health insurance program to pay their medical bills when Obeah cannot cure them. By assuming these obligations he not only maintains his authority over their religious behavior, but also extends it to cover many aspects of their secular lives. In short, he fulfills the functions of Father to them, and he well deserves his title. On the other hand, Walker has in recent years tended to neglect certain ceremonial duties.

One of the most formidable tasks of the Pocomania leader concerns the assigning of portions in the band. Each decision in this respect involves the resolution of several conflicting factors, many of which he cannot consider explicitly. First, the decision must satisfy the spirits. In theory it is the ghosts who assign portions, but the Shepherd interprets their orders and intentions. Although he has presumably gained some control over duppies through long experience in dealing with them, he must ultimately submit to their demands. He faces the constant danger of erring in his judgment and thus incurring their wrath, as we saw in the case of Walker's paralysis. Conferring an incorrect portion may also induce the ghost to harm the devotee, and repeated errors of this sort can severely damage the band's appeal to potential converts.

The leader's decision should also satisfy the appointee, who may have definite ideas about his qualifications and the wishes of his spirit. If other factors prevent assigning the desired portion, the Shepherd must pacify the devotee and convince him that the decision is correct. High ranking portions prove particularly troublesome in this respect, and ambitious members must be continually appeased with lesser benefits and subtly persuaded that they are not yet ready for such posts. Covert factors operate also. The Shepherd must analyze the actions of the member during possession and assign him a portion that will best suit his personal tendencies. For example, the aggressive man would do well as a Hunter, wherein he could express his hostile tendencies productively. Similarly, the girl who has exhibitionistic urges would probably find greatest satisfaction in the impressive role of Maid, which would make her the center of attraction.

Indeed, the best Pocomania leaders might compare favorably with lay psychotherapists in helping people resolve their emotional problems (cf. Mischel and Mischel, 1958: 254-60).

When he was younger Walker apparently did well in this respect, but of late he has shown great reluctance to confer portions at all. He maintains that his workers have not yet achieved sufficient understanding to handle such important offices, but he is neither teaching nor training them. It seems that he does not want them to develop the bizarre behavioral forms that accompany portions. His sectarian tendencies and his fear of being considered non-Christian appear to be intruding upon his judgment. In consequence of his neglect his followers become increasingly dissatisfied and his band continues to lose status in the larger cult.

A third factor in assigning any portion or higher office concerns the sentiments of other band members, who tend to be jealous and alert to detect signs of favoritism. To avoid dissension the Shepherd must therefore adjust his decision to the sociometry of the group. This is especially important in large bands, where ambitious sub-leaders can use resentments to alienate loyalties, form or strengthen factions, and ultimately break away to form new bands. Indeed, most Pocomania groups originate in such fractures. Leaders must, of course, consider this danger when appointing under-Shepherds, for investing persons of questionable loyalty would invite disintegration of the band. Yet such persons, being independent thinkers and potential leaders, are usually the best qualified, the most valuable assistants, and the most dangerous when repressed. The dilemma has no permanent resolution and as we have seen is defeating even Walker.

Fourthly, the leader should take into account the feelings of non-cultists in his community when assigning portions. These people support the group financially by attending ceremonies and also constitute potential members. Most of them consider Pocomania non-Christian and come to meetings not for religious edification but for entertainment. To maintain itself, then, the band must put on good shows. Visiting cultists and ceremonial pageantry aid in this respect, but the band depends in part upon the antics of its possessed converts to attract and amuse spectators. The Shepherd who guides his followers in the development of varied and interesting portions can thus be sure that many villagers will attend even his smaller ceremonies. Conversely, good audiences stimulate the members to work harder and dance better, increasing the excitement of meetings and the band's appeal for potential converts. Walker's recent negligence in this respect has been a major factor in the decline of his band's and his own prestige in the cult.

A fifth set of considerations, however, controls the ambitious Shepherd and prevents his conferring portions too readily. His decision must also win the approval of his colleagues, who inspect his officers to see that they meet generally accepted standards in the performance of their duties. Should these leaders find a person who showed deficiencies in his laboring or spiritual understanding, they would ridicule him as unworthy of his portion and censure the Shepherd for investing him. Moreover, they would inform other leaders of their findings, and both the erring Shepherd and his band would lose status in the cult. Repeated defections of this sort can prove disastrous, for incompetent or insincere Shepherds cannot win cooperation from their fellows and thus cannot hold successful ceremonies. Walker does not face this particular danger; his errors clearly lie in the opposite direction.

Similar problems attend other aspects of band leadership, such as designing and laying out ceremonies, maintaining discipline among followers, and meeting obligations to visiting cultists. To gain the respect of his colleagues the Shepherd has to demonstrate superior ability in every respect. An important consideration involves his power to control spirits and put them to practical uses. Since he presumably has ample experience in dealing with ghosts, he quite naturally takes up Obeah to verify his capabilities. Indeed, his proficiency in this craft constitutes a crucial measure of his prestige in the cult. All notable Pocomania figures are famous magicians, and cultists seldom discuss the merits of leaders without remarking on their necromantic skills and occult feats.[17]

Facility in Obeah enables the Pocomania Shepherd to cure sicknesses among his followers and thus serves him much like faith healing serves the sect leader. The Shepherd has additional responsibilities, however, for Pocomanians tend even more than other Jamaicans to blame their diverse misfortunes upon the depredations of malevolent ghosts and sorcerers. Also, they believe that Obeah can remedy many naturally caused ills. The Shepherd, then, becomes obligated to protect his followers from all sorts of dangers and to relieve not only sickness but dozens of other troubles as well. They expect him, for example, to recover errant husbands and stolen property, to influence the decisions of judges in lawsuits, and to insure their success in economic ventures. Moreover, he owes his services to the community, for non-cultists also believe in the efficacy of Obeah. The latter must, of course, pay dearly for his skills, and their contributions help finance his ceremonies. Magical competence can gain him high status in the community despite his unfavorable religious affiliation.

As attested by his prestige in Pocomania and in Orange River, Walker has considerable fame as an Obeah Man. Like other cult leaders he learned the basic skills from his Pocomania Father and began his practice using his personal cult spirit, with whom he already had a working relationship. He later acquired the services of other ghosts and at present claims to have twenty-four assistants, among them his two former wives, his dead son, and the shade of Father Leslie, the band's former chief. The last, being a famous Obeah Man himself, is especially powerful. The persons named all lie buried in Walker's yard, where their ghosts stay readily available at all times. Spirits demand compensation in food, silver, blood, and rum for their services, and general practice is to give them a retainer before each job and the balance upon its completion. Walker, however, makes only token payments for most tasks and settles accounts with all of his helpers at his annual Thanksgiving Table. The associated sacrifice and feast also reward the cult spirits of band members. Major Obeah jobs that require great spiritual effort involve extra remuneration, and for some Walker has to hold special Obeah Tables complete with blood sacrifices. He and his followers also provide free services to the community, invoking cult duppies to inhibit malevolent spirits and to clear away any destruction that might be present in the village.

Curiously, the necromantic activities of Pocomanians, which serve important functions for the villagers, also contribute markedly to the disrepute of the cult and the notoriety of its leaders. Most people recognize the value of these services, but they nevertheless suspect the cultists of secret, ill-intentioned dealings with their avowedly ambivalent ghostly conspirators. They seldom fully accept the reasons stated for ceremonies or the acknowledged purposes of Shepherds who privately consult their Obeah ghosts, but usually imagine ulterior motives as well. Sectarians and Zion Revivalists continually stimulate these suspicions by loudly proclaiming that no good can come from heathen sacrifices and pacts with terrestrial spirits. Yet, the pacification of malicious ghosts relieves them. In short, Jamaicans have ambivalent attitudes toward Pocomania and its members, just as toward duppies generally, and their sentiments concerning Shepherds who work Obeah are particularly strong.

What is more, Pocomanians themselves often have similar feelings. Each Shepherd knows that he practices only benevolent Obeah and that his band holds only constructive ceremonies, but he cannot be sure of his colleagues. Walker's suspicions, intensified by his status anxieties and his consequent acceptance of sectarian values, are particularly strong and extend even to his own followers. He refuses to teach Obeah to Cutlass, for example, on the grounds that the latter may put it to destructive uses. Indeed, Walker has apparently come to distrust even his own duppy helpers, for he is beginning to replace them with heavenly angels. His efforts to demonstrate his purely benevolent intentions have failed, however, and just as he suspects other leaders of malpractice, the villagers continue to suspect him. Pocomanians, and especially their leaders, seem unable to escape their notoriety, but rather appear destined always to heighten it.

The Status and Prospects of Rural Pocomania

Although it has fared somewhat better than the Convince cult, rural Pocomania is fighting the same losing battle for survival against growing sectarian forces. The independent Shepherds of St. Mary, in fact, have been reduced to positions which closely resemble those of Bongo Men. The reasons, too, are similar. People enjoy the ceremonies of Pocomania and appreciate the services that it renders them in laying ghosts, but because it has a non-Christian focus and an unsavory reputation they view it with ambivalence and avoid affiliating with it. Their reactions seem to stem not so much from Christian values--for they agree with the traditional beliefs and premises of Pocomania--as from the strong value on being Christian and from a reluctance to become associated with spirits considered pagan. Only the most isolated and least acculturated of them, and relatively few of these, remain susceptible to conversion.

Father Walker's policies in Orange River, whatever his motives, illustrate one kind of attempt to solve this problem of survival. By shifting the character of his band toward Zion Revivalism Walker has adapted it to growing Christian influences in the community, and in so doing has induced the conversion of persons who would have avoided a more conservative group. His emphasis upon heavenly angels and sectarian prayer meetings, combined with the traditional ghost worship, Obeah, and exciting Tables, has enabled Orange River Pocomania to duplicate the functions of both Zion Revival and Convince and to overwhelm these other cults in the village. Walker's solution nevertheless has grave disadvantages, and his success is far from permanent. His progressive policies prevent the promotion and satisfactions of older, more conservative band members, who are therefore creating dissension. The move toward Christian orthodoxy has cost him the support of many other leaders, and if it continues Pocomania will renounce him. His band will split, leaving him and his followers to Zion Revival. If he reverses his trend he will lose his precarious favor among the villagers.

Other St. Mary Pocomanians, who uphold traditional patterns and tend to resist change, fare worse. Fewer persons join the cult each year, and the bands become continually smaller and more widely dispersed. Leaders cannot gather their scattered followers for regular meetings, render them adequate services, or take them in hand for training. To manage successful ceremonies and thus escape utter extinction they have adapted organizationally, evolving a complex set of reciprocal obligations and privileges among the bands and independent members of wide areas. This ceremonial cooperation grows increasingly important as the cult declines and participants become scarcer. Yet, it is merely a delaying action.

Neither of the two routes open to rural Pocomania, then, promises survival. Walker's road leads to submergence in Zion Revival, while the other follows Convince into oblivion.

The city, however, offers a more favorable environment for Pocomania, and cultists there have discovered a third kind of adaptation--an alternative which offers greater hope.

Chapter 8

URBAN POCOMANIA

Introductory Statement

The rural and urban branches of Pocomania show few if any fundamental dissimilarities. They rest upon the same basic premises and principles, and there is a good deal of communication between them. Some city bands stand like Walker's group on the verge of Zion Revivalism, while others resemble the more traditional rural units. Most are considerably larger, however, and exhibit various features not found in the country. Pocomania has made distinctive adaptations to metropolitan conditions and has responded more successfully in the city to pressures toward acculturation. The present chapter describes and analyzes these characteristically urban developments and attempts to explain their greater success.

Most of the writer's data on urban Pocomania come from Spanish Town, which is much smaller and less metropolitan than Kingston and thus does not provide maximal contrast with rural villages. This creates a problem, for Spanish Town Pocomania, too, falls short of the urban standards set in Kingston. Fortunately, the two cities and their cultists are in close contact, and the writer was able to gather a substantial amount of supplementary information on Pocomania groups in the larger metropolis. He is also fortunate in having available Simpson's detailed account of revivalism in the great slum area of West Kingston (Simpson, 1956). For comparative purposes, these supplementary data often have greater significance than the Spanish Town material. The analysis begins with a sketch of the physical and sociocultural environment of Pocomania in the two cities.

The Urban Setting

Kingston and Spanish Town lie on the eastern part of Jamaica's hot, arid southern plain and are cut off by the Blue Mountains from the prevailing winds and frequent rains that refresh the north coast. During the summer, at least, they swelter under an oppressive tropical sun, although an ocean breeze usually brings relief at night. Kingston's coastal position has advantages over that of Spanish Town, which lies inland fifteen miles to the west amid large sugar estates. The railroad and a modern, well-traveled highway facilitate transportation between the two cities and permit the ready exchange of information and innovations. Most of the latter originate in Kingston, the capital and chief port, which has well over a hundred thousand inhabitants and forms the political, social, and commercial center of the island.[1] Spanish Town, with some fifteen thousand residents, connects the port by railway and road with all western and most northern points. The former capital and social center, it has fallen somewhat into decay during the last century. Its population seems more uniformly depressed than that of Kingston, which shows extreme differences in social and economic conditions. The poverty-stricken lower classes, which are of central concern here, predominate numerically in both cities.

During recent decades Kingston has grown tremendously, largely through the influx of lower-class people from rural areas (Cumper, 1949: 18-23; Roberts, 1957: 144-64). More people arrive each week from all over the island--to find work, sell produce in the markets, and for various other reasons--and despite the lack of economic opportunity many of them remain. They seldom realize whatever hopes and expectations they may have of city life. Some find steady employment, but thousands meet only disappointment and have to subsist by doing odd jobs, begging, stealing, and other forms of "scuffling" (Simpson, 1956: 322-4, 343). Most of them gravitate to the West Kingston slums and live in rooms let by older residents, in shacks constructed of waste materials on city lands, or in government housing projects. There is great overcrowding, for space is limited and the government cannot keep up with the rapidly increasing needs for housing and facilities. Thousands of people must use public water and sanitary installations, and some rooms are so crowded that the residents have to sleep in shifts or in the kitchens.

This pervasive poverty, congestion, and unemployment promotes high crime and delinquency rates, fosters much sickness and disease, and gives rise to many other problems. Educational facilities remain sorely inadequate despite government efforts, and school attendance cannot be enforced. Many children thus receive little guidance in adjusting to modern urban life, and the old, traditional ideas continue to exert great influence over their thinking. The poorer people, both adults and children, have much time on their hands and few opportunities for organized recreation. As Simpson says, "leisure-time activities consist largely of fighting, gambling, sex adventures, gossiping and arguing, sleeping, and roaming around" (Simpson, 1956: 333). Many people even have difficulty getting food, for there is no land to grow crops and nearly all foodstuffs must be purchased. Food is cheap and plentiful at the markets, but for persons without jobs or money obtaining it becomes a serious problem.

Spanish Town has absorbed part of the backwash from the Kingston migration, but not enough to develop a serious and permanent congestion problem. On the other hand, it offers even less economic opportunity than the capital. It contains almost no industry, and its commercial establishments serve only local needs. A large proportion of its inhabitants work as laborers on the surrounding estates and others have crafts or jobs in town, but many have to seek work in Kingston or "scuffle" for a living. The numerous agricultural jobs that open up during the sugar season afford little relief, for hundreds of people flood in from Kingston to take them. Indeed, unemployment may actually increase at this time. The problems of housing, disease, crime, and begging certainly do, and conditions begin to approach those in the larger metropolis. As in the latter, educational and recreational facilities remain perennially inadequate.

Lower-class residence patterns in both Kingston and Spanish Town show marked instability. Humanity flows constantly into the urban area and trickles out, job hunters move seasonally between city and country, and permanent townspeople shift about continually in search of more adequate employment and housing. Marriage ties are even looser than in rural villages (cf. Cumper, 1958). Both men and women, it seems, try persistently but unsuccessfully to find dependable and compatible spouses. The writer found after nine months' absence, for example, that more than half of his informants had changed their homes or their mates or both, and that several had moved from one city to the other. This inability to establish firm and lasting social relationships fosters considerable personal insecurity and indicates that emotional problems may rival economic ones.

The townsfolk retain strong kinship ties which in many cases provide partial solutions to these problems. Relatives always offer food, lodging, and sympathetic company at least temporarily, and some jobless individuals depend for years on such hospitality. Persons without available kinsmen, for example fatherless youths forced by lack of inheritance to leave their villages, face the greatest of difficulties, for they have no reliable sources of support in times of crisis. Such unfortunates must seek temporary help from friends or attach themselves to the cliques of affluent figures like shopkeepers and landholders. These sources do not, however, afford much economic or emotional security.

Urban conditions, then, appear even more difficult than rural ones. Yet, many of the townspeople's problems remain similar in kind to those of rural folk, and as we might expect elicit generally similar religious responses. As in the country, lower-class persons tend to reject the established churches in favor of the more adaptable cults and independent sects. Indeed, Simpson found that eleven of the fifteen West Kingston slums contained no established churches whatever, while the other four together had only seven, some of which may have been independent sects (Simpson, 1956: 401). Also, the most depressed and least acculturated people seem to prefer cults over sects. Like their rural counterparts, urban independent sects and cults aid both economic and emotional security through group membership, cooperation, and dependence upon strong leaders, and provide health insurance and magical or religious curing facilities. Further, they afford acceptable means of expressing aggressions, usually through possession, and furnish amusement not only to members but also to thousands of spectators. Their ceremonies, in fact, constitute the chief form of organized recreation available to the urban poor.

The city does, however, present distinctive problems and unique religious forms. For example, it contains vast amounts of wealth and luxury, which to the naive country migrant imply great opportunity. The high expectations thus engendered herald bitter disappointments and elicit strong resentments and hostilities toward those with riches and power. Such sentiments nurture the nativistic Ras Tafari cult, a politico-religious movement that protests European domination and promises Negro mastery of the world. Almost exclusively an urban development, Ras Tafari has numerous groups in Kingston and at least one permanent body in Spanish Town.[3] The city gives rise to various other religious permutations and promotes a greater variety of sect and cult groups than are found in rural environments. Spanish Town, for example, contains Moslem and Hindu bodies, at least twenty distinct independent sects, and five different cults.

The centralized settlement pattern of the city, in combination with the intense and pervasive economic problems of its lower-class inhabitants, also has important effects upon religion. It supports literally hundreds of religious groups within a highly restricted space. The realization that religious leadership can bring security and even profit constantly stimulates the formation of new bodies, however, until the supply exceeds the demand for them. Each group strives continually to increase its membership, and the fierce competition that results forms an outstanding feature of the urban religious situation. Even the various bands within each cult and sect engage in strong rivalry, for all serve the same population and lie within easy walking distance of each other. Sect and cult camps stand on every block in West Kingston, appealing to the passer-by with singing and dancing, drums and tambourines, fervent preaching, and passionate testimonies. Zion Revivalists, Ras Tafarians, and some sectarians compete blatantly through street meetings. Even in Spanish Town, which contains seven large Zion Revival bands and numerous smaller ones, few evenings pass without the occurrence of at least three or four ceremonies. These, then, are the conditions under which urban Pocomania operates, and its responses to them constitute some of its most distinctive features.

Pocomanians in Spanish Town and Kingston

The 1943 Census of Jamaica lists only 502 Pocomanians for the Kingston-St. Andrew metropolitan area. This count is far too low, because most cultists call themselves Revivalists and do not answer to the derogatory term Pocomania. The census does not include a Revivalist category, but as Simpson suggests, many Pocomanians probably appear under the headings No Religion, Non-Denominational, Not Specified, and Other Religions. Some no doubt listed themselves as Baptists or other sectarians.[4] Simpson, who does not consider Pocomania separately, estimates that "there are at least 3,000 faithful Revivalist-Pocomanian devotees in West Kingston alone, and that two or three times that number of persons are significantly involved in the total Revival Zion-Pocomania-Obeah complex in that area" (Simpson, 1956: 339). Even this number may be low, for local experts estimate 2,000 or more converted Pocomanians, excluding Zion Revivalists, for the metropolitan area.[5] The addition of non-converted members would raise this figure, which agrees with the present writer's impression, to at least 3,000.

The great majority of urban Pocomanians reside in the West Kingston slums. The cult centers in Trench Town, one of the largest and most depressed of the slum sections, which according to Williams contains twenty-three ceremonial camps. Each band, he says, includes between fifty and three hundred members (Williams, 1955). Today this would be an overstatement, for the leader of Kingston's largest group claims only two hundred followers, and some lesser bands have no more than twenty. Perhaps thirty additional camps lie scattered about in other neighborhoods. The various bands have formal ceremonial relationships, but each normally remains independent of the others and competes with them for members. Temporary confederacies form occasionally and may last for two or three years. Members shift from group to group with relative ease.

Spanish Town Pocomania, as the community's size and location may indicate, occupies a somewhat peripheral position in the urban cult as a whole. It consists, in effect, of only one really significant, functioning band, although three other groups make formal claims to partial or complete independence. One of these, under Shepherd Ronnie, is an offshoot from the larger band and still remains in most ways subsidiary to it. The second developed separately but has only five members and cannot hold successful meetings by itself. The leader, Shepherd Babu, has consequently joined with Ronnie and with Daddy Wood, the Father of the main band, and at most ceremonies the three groups function as a single unit. The fourth group is new, being currently organized by a Shepherd Handy who has recently moved from Kingston. It has only three members but receives ceremonial support from the band to which Handy belonged in the larger city. Handy does not cooperate with the other local leaders, who return his hostility.

Membership in Spanish Town Pocomania varies with the seasons and with local economic conditions. During the research period it stood at about thirty, which informants said was a record low. Economic factors account in part for this decline. Diminishing job opportunities in recent years have driven perhaps two dozen cultists elsewhere in search of work. Some went to Kingston, while others traveled west and south to the sugar plain of Vere in Clarendon parish, where agricultural opportunities seem to be expanding. Much of the blame for this loss of members, however, lies with Wood himself. Formerly a distinguished and widely respected

Father, he has now become an alcoholic and lost interest in his work. He no longer instructs or trains his followers adequately, and seldom assigns portions or gives promotions. His ceremonies reflect indifferent planning, the band lacks discipline, and contributions from members go mostly for rum. Given little security and few other benefits by Wood, the members grow deeply dissatisfied, and many without other ties in Spanish Town move away. A few, however, remain loyal, and through diligent effort Shepherd Ronnie has retained others. Indeed, Ronnie has prevented disintegration of the band, but until he breaks completely with Wood he cannot rebuild it.

The Pocomanians of Spanish Town, like those of Orange River, all come from the lowest social class and remain relatively isolated, either physically or socially, from the sources of Western influence. They live in small, hand-built, one or two room shacks on the outskirts of town or in rooms in the poorer sections. Several are illiterate and none have more than rudimentary schooling. Only a few enjoy steady, dependable incomes; most of them work seasonally or intermittently as agricultural laborers or at comparable urban occupations. Some subsist by doing odd jobs, while several have no observable sources of income. The four leaders, but only they, own land and houses. Handy operates a shop and the other three have rooms to let. None are legally married, and few have maintained their present sweetheart relationships for longer than two years. Ages range from twelve, a newly-converted girl fresh from Kingston, to Wood's and Babu's sixty-odd years. The majority are women, most of them over thirty and living at least periodically without spouses or other menfolk.[6] The writer's meager data on their personal histories indicate that, as in the Orange River band, conversion may commonly follow traumatic experiences involving loss of security.

Some of the men, too, live alone, and several are itinerants who stay only sporadically in Spanish Town. Most of them have no apparent family or kinship ties and very likely grew up as adopted children. At least a few spent their childhoods without fathers or in houses lacking adult males entirely. Significantly, a number of them show evidence of sexual inversion. Wood himself is an overt homosexual and has a small retinue of male Armor Bearers, converts, and hangers-on with similar erotic preferences. Such aberrant sex practices also occur with some frequency among cultists in Kingston. Indeed, one local expert suspects that most urban Pocomania leaders are either homosexuals or satyrs.[7]

Furthermore, many overtly normal cultists show evidence of latent homosexuality. Men frequently form strong emotional attachments to their Shepherds, for example, and the latter all practice ceremonial transvesticism. Some go beyond cult prescriptions; Shepherd Ronnie wears bracelets, earrings, and a braided wig at ceremonies and uses patterned feminine gestures in his dance. Although overt homosexuality seems restricted mainly to the city, these tendencies occur also in rural areas. Cutlass, for example, wears feminine underclothing beneath his Shepherd's gown and openly claims to use even a brassiere. Moreover, he boasts about his skill at women's work and frequently goes about the village dressed in shorts, both of which are considered definitely unmasculine traits (cf. Mischel and Mischel, 1958: 256).

It seems likely, although the data remain inconclusive, that Pocomanian homosexuality and tendencies toward it are somehow related to the high rate of fatherless childhoods among these cultists. Many of these men grew up without male companionship or adult male models, and some, like Cutlass, had to perform female chores like cooking and laundering. Such experiences perhaps engender emotional problems which in turn influence conversion to Pocomania. Continuing search for the strong, dependable father who was always lacking may be a major factor, and role conflicts may produce transvestite or homosexual tendencies which can be expressed through cult activities. The hypothesis seems to merit further investigation, as does the question of why overt homosexual relations become more prevalent among urban Pocomanians. The latter practices apparently remain largely separate from religious activities as such. In Spanish Town, at least, they seem to have no direct effects upon ceremonial policy or band structure.

Organization of the Urban Pocomania Band

The centralized urban settlement pattern enables even a disreputable cult like Pocomania to develop groups large enough to hold major ceremonies independently and often. This gives potential converts repeated opportunities and enticements to join the cult and provides members with greater security and more frequent occasions for ceremonial expression. On the other hand, inter-group competition increases in the city, putting the less popular cults at a disadvantage. To meet this competion, urban Pocomanians have had to develop new ways and improve old ways of attracting and retaining members. Some of these innovations concern band organization.

One of the most striking developments rests upon the greater affluence of leaders and the readier availability of band resources in the city, and seems to reflect heavier dependence of metropolitan cultists upon these facilities. It involves the convert's advancement in status. As in the country, conversion and subsequent promotions depend, according to cult belief, entirely upon the decisions of spirits. Some persons progress faster than others, but the process of achieving a portion ordinarily takes at least a year and the attainment of higher positions like that of Shepherd several times longer. Some urban ghosts, however, put selected devotees through intensive training courses for faster advancement. This process is termed "taking ground," and the person undergoing it a "soul." Theoretically a new convert may become a soul, but in practice such training is usually restricted to experienced members who show talent and promise. Duppies quite often choose ambitious persons who believe their promotions overdue, but sometimes strike also disobedient devotees who need discipline. All souls behave in much the same way, and all receive promotions upon completion of their courses.

The experience begins with a violent trance, much like that of conversion, which may last several hours. The soul then falls into a deep but more peaceful state of possession, receiving preliminary communications from his spirit, and after a day or so regains his senses. Even then, however, he remains under partial spiritual control. Four times a day for several weeks or some months, at noon, at midnight, and at six o'clock morning and evening, he goes into trance for an hour or more, rolling slowly about on the ground, talking to unseen beings, and calling for hymns and Bible readings. Even when conscious he is unable to walk unaided and must not smoke, drink rum, eat salted food, or leave the ceremonial grounds. Other members keep him constant company and give him the most tender care, and sometimes special helpers are assigned to watch over him. They build a little shelter or "office" for him, cook and serve his food, help him bathe and change clothes, play games with him, and read or sing to him upon request. The band leader assumes responsibility for his welfare and finances the entire procedure.

During his trances the soul goes, in effect, to classes. His spirit gives him various "teachments," instructing him in the duties and behaviors associated with his future position, training him to talk tongues, and imparting to him important spiritual secrets. He goes on long journeys with the ghost to learn traveling procedures, and on these trips meets other spirits who give him additional training. He writes down all his experiences in a copy book, and when conscious studies them to prepare for his final examinations. His Shepherd observes his actions and words closely to discover his impending portion, and holds extended discussions with him regarding his progress. At the end of his prescribed period the soul rises from the ground and describes his travels at a special ceremony called a Rising Table, to which various leaders have been invited. His Shepherd reviews this testimony and interprets the behavior which he has observed, suggesting the position that he thinks should be awarded. The other leaders examine the soul to check his qualifications and then hold a conference. After they have reached an agreement, which usually supports the host's suggestion, the latter makes the appointment.[8]

Small bands that convene infrequently have neither the facilities nor the resident personnel to care for souls, particularly for extended periods, and their leaders must usually restrain incipient ground-takers. For this reason, perhaps, the practice has not become popular in the country. Even in large bands the taking of ground must be controlled, since it holds such obvious attractions for destitute persons. Consequently, most leaders subtly discourage it among new converts and see that older members undergo it only occasionally and for relatively short periods. Terms of more than a month or so on the ground have become largely restricted to talented and favored officers and usually lead to high positions such as Shepherd rather than to ordinary portions.[9] Many urban leaders, but not all of them, have attained their ranks through this process. As we might expect, terms on the ground average shorter in Spanish Town than in Kingston. Ronnie, for example, gained his Shepherdship after only three weeks as a soul.

Urban Pocomania bands show distinctiveness not only in the achievement of status but also in the statuses themselves. Being generally larger and more continually active than rural groups, they have developed various organizational complexities. First, the positions of Governess, Shepherd, and Mother become more sharply differentiated from portions. Rural Pocomanians with these statuses, we remember, often function primarily as high ranking portion-holders. Some, particularly Governesses, have no administrative duties or extra privileges at all. In the city these positions become definite administrative offices. Even Governesses enjoy specifically defined authority over other members and incur clearly prescribed responsibilities toward them. Moreover, the large urban band may contain several persons with each of these statuses and assign them different functions and obligations. One Kingston group, for example, has four Mothers; a senior or Bands Mother who is second in command of the band, a Camp Mother in charge of souls and ceremonial grounds, a Pilgrim Mother who leads trips to country villages, and an Indian Mother with direct authority over all members who have Coolie spirits (cf. Simpson, 1956: 403). Similar functional distinctions apply to Governesses and assistant Shepherds.

Some bands use other, more spiritual criteria to differentiate executive officers, who do not, we remember, change or relinquish their portions upon advancement but rather develop within them. The Hunter, then, becomes a Hunting Shepherd in charge of members with similar portions, and the Water Maid becomes a Water Governess with authority over others who work in pools and rivers. Behavioral criteria sometimes override spiritual ones and produce Spinning Shepherds who gyrate like tops when possessed, Wheeling Governesses who whirl more slowly, Center Mothers who work at the hub of the laboring circle, and Sitting Fathers who have retired from active spiritual dancing.[10] Urban Pocomania also contains a few statuses, comparable in rank to portions and sometimes considered as such, which carry no specialized spiritual functions and seem to constitute explicit steps to administrative positions. One is the Wheeler, another the Center Girl, a third the Shepherd Boy, and a fourth the Bandsman. The last appears most often in small bands of which he can take temporary charge.

The behavioral emphasis seen in such positions as Wheeler, Spinning Shepherd, and Center Girl reflects another organizational feature of urban Pocomania--its varied array of spectacular portions. In order to meet competition from other religious groups, city bands must attract large numbers of paying spectators and potential converts to their ceremonies, for they have low rates of conversion. Since most people do not attend Pocomania meetings for religious purposes, the bands must lure them with entertainment, much of which is provided by the antics of possessed officers. To meet this challenge, the urban cult has developed literally dozens of portions not found in the country. Each of these involves distinctive ritual actions and paraphernalia and thus adds its bit of interest and drawing power to ceremonies. The portions also help to retain members. As in the country, each of them constitutes a particular, named status providing a measure of individuality, and each embraces special spiritual functions for the traveling band, giving its holder a feeling of being useful and wanted. Together they offer a great variety of opportunities for self-expression, which must prove quite advantageous in groups containing large numbers of persons with widely varied aspirations, capabilities, and emotional problems.

The array of Pocomania functionaries in the city is truly impressive. Forest Men, Ambush Women, and Explorers help the Hunters, Ramblers, and Searchers in woodland environments, while Swordsmen, Lancers, Guardsmen, and Sergeants join forces with Warriors in combat against evil spirits on plains and deserts. Planners, Surveyors, Pilots, and Compasses work with Spyers to decide routes and plan itineraries. Sawyers and Clearers bring their imaginary tools to cooperate with Ax Men and Cutters in removing undergrowth and destruction. Messengers, Runner Men, and Letter Bearers deliver reports, relay orders, and run other spiritual errands. Flowers Girls show the travelers through gardens, Guides conduct them on tours of foreign cities, and Scouts lead them through the wilderness. Flag Holders bear the colors, while Buglers and Trumpeters sound vocal signals with invisible instruments. One group allegedly conceives of itself as a train and contains not only an Engineer, Brakemen, Coal Workers, and Conductors, but also a Locomotive. Other bands include Watchmen, Greeters, Postmen, Timekeepers, Staffmen, and even such improbable and bizarre functionaries as Milkmaids, Water Wheels, and Cooing Doves. The Spanish Town group has a Chinese Girl, a Brigade Man, an Ambush Queen, and a Bell Ringer. Simpson found in addition Approvers and Prophets.[11] New portions devised by ingenious leaders appear every year.

Urban Pocomanians have made this increasingly bewildering multitude of officers more understandable by grouping them into sets, or "orders," and assigning them relative ranks. The most important and popular portions such as Water Maid, Hunter, Cutter, and Searcher occupy the highest places, but others provide equal opportunity for advancement. Each has its acting and validated phases, and all can lead to administrative offices. There is a Sawing Shepherd in Spanish Town, for example, and even the lowly Flowers Girl can become a Flowers Mother. Orders vary from band to band, but usually comprise portions with similar functions or laboring stations. They include the Bush or Forest order of woodland specialists, the Water order for Maids and other aquatic creatures, the Planning order of officers who decide routes and stops, and the Fighting or combat order. The recent development of an Indian order constitutes one of the most remarkable features of the modern cult and merits special consideration.

The Indian order began in the 1930's, it is said, at a Rising Table given by a resourceful and imaginative Kingston Shepherd with a flair for theatrics.[12] The three souls who were rising at this ceremony had been struck to the ground by Indian ghosts, he claimed, and had achieved the portions of Indian Girl, Indian Maid, and Indian Warrior. The spirits had trained these converts to speak Indian tongues and to perform East Indian dances, and had instructed them to wear appropriate garments and jewelry. American movies seem to have promoted some confusion of ideas, for the new officers had tipis as offices and appeared in feathered headdresses but also wore East Indian bangles, saris, and satin vestments. Nevertheless, the colorful ceremony proved highly successful, drawing a huge crowd and bringing substantial profits. Thus encouraged, Indian spirits began possessing Pocomanians throughout the city and conferring Coolie portions upon them. Dozens of variations and elaborations upon the original theme appeared, until the Indian complex grew into a major movement within urban Pocomania. During recent years it has been diffusing into rural areas as well, but has not become particularly popular there.

Almost every urban band now contains at least a few Coolie officers, and many have large companies of them. They become possessed by their personal Indian spirits, perform their special dances, and serve their spiritual functions when the band travels through India. In fact, they usually take command of the band at this point and do not allow other officers to work. Indian spirits include not only the ghosts of Jamaican Coolies, but also those of powerful kings and princes from India and even vaguely conceived Hindu angels and gods. Spanish Town informants put great emphasis on three such deities; Ram Pasal, Mirage, and Copalsingh. Such spirits confer a great variety of portions and higher positions, paralleling most ordinary ones and adding others. There are Indian Hunters, Water Maids, and Center Doves; Indian Flag Governesses, Spinning Shepherds, and Sitting Fathers; and in addition Indian Queens and Kings. In some bands the Coolies form organized sub-groups that hold special Indian ceremonies, and there are even a number of exclusively Indian bands. Babu's small group in Spanish Town is one such, including an Indian Ax Man and an Indian Cymbal. Ronnie, too, is an Indian Shepherd, although he also has a Negro spirit. Indeed, the sub-cult has become so strong and popular that it now rivals its parent and threatens to engulf it.

The urban band, with its larger size and more permanent character, requires also a larger and more complex staff of helpers and non-spiritual officers than does the rural group. It usually contains a greater profusion of hangers-on and part-time helpers without official status, and also a larger number of Nurses and Armor Bearers. Some leaders have four or five of the latter, each with a particular function like valet, bodyguard, or water bearer. Several Cymbal Men, specializing in different languages, may also be included. The Bible Mother or Pilot may have an assistant for tracing hymns. The duties of Matrons complement those of Nurses, while Water Bearers may take over the job of serving water to laborers. A Vinyard Keeper, assisted by a temporal Flower Girl, tends the ceremonial grounds, keeps the yard decorated with flowers, and arranges paraphernalia for meetings. Non-spiritual Gate Keepers, Messengers, and Greeters have obvious ceremonial functions, as do Butchers and Cooks. Some bands have Reporters to visit and report on sick converts or to spy on members suspected of disobedient behavior. A Secretary often handles band records, and special helpers may assist the souls who cannot leave group headquarters. Finally, the colorful parades that precede major ceremonies require the services of non-converted Flag Bearers, Staffmen with shepherds' crooks, Cross Bearers, and Acolytes to flank the leaders. All these functionaries contribute to the impressiveness and attractiveness of the group and its ceremonies.

Urban Ceremonial Elaboration

Pocomania band headquarters, too, become larger and more complex in the city and reflect conditions peculiar to the urban environment. Some, like rural camps, occupy the yards of leaders, but others are devoted permanently and exclusively to religious activities. High fences or hedges protect them and control admission to ceremonies. Most Kingston and Spanish Town camps have neither permanent church buildings nor temporary arbors, for there is little threat from rain and great need for space to accommodate large crowds.[13] They do often contain smaller structures such as offices for souls and leaders or permanent, covered altars, however. Pools for Maids and Water Men have prominent positions and are often of elaborate cement construction with vases and candle holders embedded in the rims. Various posts and platforms holding flags, candles, vases, placards, and other ritual objects stand in corners and crannies amid growing plants and whitewashed stones. These "stations" attract and house spirits, which members keep supplied with fresh water, cut flowers, and food.[14]

As in rural areas, the Seal, or consecrated area and focus of ceremonial activities, occupies the center of the yard. Whereas the country Seal often remains unmarked, however, the urban one almost always contains a prominent altar which is similar in appearance to other "stations" but more elaborate and is built around a tall bamboo Center Pole. The latter, which normally bears a red flag with symbolic designs such as stars and crosses, has extreme importance, for it houses the spirit who rules the yard and protects the band. Urban Pocomanians cannot, like their country fellows, bury their dead at home and thus gain resident spirits automatically. Instead they must "load" their Seals with ghosts acquired elsewhere. The Shepherd usually buys the spirit, contained in a human skull, from a municipal grave digger and secures its services through Obeah. He and a few trusted followers then install it with a secret "pole planting" rite, burying it deeply in the Seal together with an open Bible, rum, silver coins, magical oils, and mystic symbols drawn on parchment, and raising the Pole over it. Subsidiary and temporary Seals which are not thus "loaded" have little protective power and cannot be used for really important ceremonies.

Evening prayer meetings, held weekly, biweekly, or even semiweekly, resemble those in Orange River but tend to be larger, longer, and less sectarian in character. Having only minor spiritual significance and normally attracting but few spectators, they are often led by assistant Shepherds. Helpers clean the yard in advance and arrange the Bible, hymnal, lamps, candles, flowers, and water on an altar or small table. The members gather after sundown to sing, pray, dance, and hear scripture readings. Angels or ghosts frequently come and possess them, although they are not specifically called. Members do not dress, but usually bring their uniforms in case the spirits should demand them during possession.[15] Most prayer meetings end after a few hours, but some last longer. The writer observed one in Spanish Town that lasted for two days. It began spontaneously when some members collected in Wood's yard to discuss a coming Table, and did not end until they had exhausted themselves with spiritual laboring.

In response to intense competition and to the needs of their many members, urban Pocomania bands hold larger, longer, and more frequent major ceremonies than do rural groups. The combined Spanish Town band averages six or seven Tables each year, and some Kingston groups far exceed this number. Urban ceremonies also exhibit rapid change and great variation. Both Simpson and Williams discuss baptismal rites, which the groups studied by the present writer did not perform, and Williams describes the formerly popular Sealing ceremony held to validate baptism (Simpson, 1956: 367-82; Williams, 1955). Such strange sounding functions as Four Pole Tables, Circle Tables, Whipping Tables, Ten Virgins Tables, and Spinning Tables also occur. The writer heard often of Fire Keys in which possessed converts dance on burning coals, and has observed Fasting Tables, African Feasts, Consecration Tables, and the special Tables and dinners held by the Indian order. One Kingston Shepherd makes an annual Pocomania version of the Moslem Indian festival called Hosay, which involves the building, parading, and destruction of a large tinsel and crepe tower housing evil spirits (cf. Beckwith, 1924).

Many informants spoke about Ground Tables, wherein the ritual paraphernalia is arranged directly on the ground, and claimed that they constitute powerful destruction rites used only for supernatural killing. Ground Tables do occur in the city--local experts have observed them, and Moore describes one held in Morant Bay--but the present writer has never seen one or interviewed a person who admitted participating in one, and can neither validate nor disprove the contention that they have murderous ends. Moore does not explain the purpose of the one he observed, but says that in St. Thomas they have both destructive and counter-destructive uses (Moore, 1954: 61-2; 95-104). Most informants agreed that Ground Tables occurred quite frequently in the past and have almost died out in recent years. This may indicate that this format was formerly a normal and accepted procedure in urban Pocomania and that only lately, under sectarian influence, has it acquired a dishonorable reputation and become deviant.

Most urban ceremonies resemble those held in rural areas. Even large ones follow the same general procedures of scheduling, preparation, receiving and treating guests, and organization. As in the country, the great majority of major events may be classified as Thanksgiving, Uplifting, Memorial, Mourning, and Obeah Tables. Variations and elaborations on these basic types appear in such profusion in the city that it seems unprofitable to discuss them at length here. Descriptions of several kinds of Tables may be found in other works.[16] The present writer can only trace some of the more striking and typical urban developments and try to impart something of the distinctive flavor of metropolitan Pocomania ceremonies. Much of this flavor derives from a strong, frankly admitted emphasis on pageantry and theatrics--an emphasis not apparent among rural cultists--and a corresponding decrease in strictly religious motives and sentiments.

Major urban Tables usually begin on Sunday evenings with processions designed to attract the attention of potential spectators and to clear the ceremonial grounds of loiterers.

These parades are quite large and elaborate, sometimes involving hundreds of participants, and require extensive preparation. Dressing alone may take several hours, for many members wear intricate uniforms which must be donned with care and precision. Some leaders have special parade robes resembling the vestments of high Roman Catholic dignitaries. Indian officers present perhaps the most striking appearance, with their brilliant red and yellow gowns of silk and satin, their gauze veils, their elaborate headdresses, and their bangles and bells. Each band marches as a unit, with its banner in front and the leader encircled by Staffmen, Cross Bearers, and Acolytes, and each tries to outdo the others in exciting interest and impressing viewers. Some parades continue for two or three hours and cover large sections of the city, collecting great crowds. Even in Spanish Town, the writer has seen upwards of four hundred persons enter the yard in the wake of such a procession.

The first night of the Table forms a spectacle, designed primarily to impress and entertain the audience rather than to provide religious edification. Many activities take religious forms, but even the prayers and hymns reflect this theatrical emphasis. The paraders file into the yard in full voice, partly marching and partly dancing, and circle around the table with much posturing and bowing. Shepherds and Fathers spin at intervals out of the moving ring and whirl about the yard with swirling robes and flying sashes, pausing before the various stations to perform elaborate gesticulations. Hunters also circle about, growling and snarling, to keep the spectators clear of the Seal. Fathers move with pomp and dignity through the throng, attended by Armor Bearers and Staffmen, and ritually greet one another with solemn words and stately gestures. After perhaps an hour of such activity, the host takes a position at the head of the table and extends his hands skyward. Other leaders flank him, the singing and dancing stop, and the main part of the ceremony begins formally.

The host starts off with a speech to introduce himself, explain the purpose of the Table, and pay his respect to the guests. He then delivers a long, involved prayer asking for heavenly blessings upon the assembly and the proceedings. Speeches and prayers by other leaders follow, punctuated by hymns, choruses, and Bible readings. Spiritual dancing and light possession come next, with various officers occasionally performing their special gyrations. The Indians may take over for a short period to deliver a colorful dance. Shepherds spin about, each trying to outdo the others in speed and endurance. Band leaders give loud and stern orders to their followers, dispatch assistants on mysterious errands, and punish errant participants with blows of their wands. High ranking dignitaries sometimes receive spiritual visitations and render revelations or commands in unknown tongues, which are then translated by linguistic specialists.

Occasionally two possessed Fathers may hold an impressive discussion or a heated argument in tongues. These usually remain untranslated and become the subjects of much discussion among spectators. Neither violent possession nor heavy laboring normally occur during this phase of the ceremony, and most participants save their energies for later events. Yet, the pageantry and histrionics provide excitement and amusement for the audience.

Candle lighting and table breaking rituals, accompanied by additional speeches and announcements, take place shortly after midnight, as do special events such as the crowning of new Shepherds and the examination of candidates for portions. Then, one by one, the leaders "blow their notes" to summon the spirits of their respective bands. Pandemonium ensues as the duppies arrive in force and begin knocking converts about the yard. For a picture of this scene the writer cannot improve upon the words of Fermor.

> "The speed and the violence with which the crises of possession occurred was as strange as anything we had witnessed in the practice of Voodoo. One after the other the adepts fell to the ground as though they had been mown down by rifle fire and lay there kicking and writhing and shuddering in desperate pangs. I counted thirty-four at one moment, all prostrate. Their flailing feet raised a cloud of dust. The barking and howling had sunk

> to a chorus of moans and gasps and sobs as the vessels of possession squirmed and writhed, or, with arms outstretched, rolled over and over. The throes of incarnation were reminiscent of a net-load of fish which has just been hauled out of the water and emptied on the sea-shore" (Fermor, 1950: 346).

Helpers hurry to control the devotees, however, and under the direction of Fathers order is quickly regained. The laboring circle forms, a cymbal is sounded, and the spiritual journey begins.

This stage of the ceremony proceeds at a slower pace than its rural counterpart, yet exhibits greater variety and is thus more interesting. The leaders, relying on their numerous specialists to provide ample entertainment, inhibit heavy, rapid laboring so that their followers will remain fresh for subsequent events. The possessed officers seldom fail to put on a good show. Four or five Hunters may operate at the same time, frightening spectators and occasionally even nipping those who move slowly. Ax Men, Sawyers, and Cutters work together in a veritable orgy of bush clearing. The voices of Bell Ringers, Trumpeters, and Cryers rise above that of the Cymbal Man, and sometimes the entire group labors in a line behind the "ch-ch-ch" of a Locomotive or an Engine. Water Maids may work two or three at a time in their pool, or they may take turns, competing for the attention of onlookers against Divers and Cooing Water Doves. Announcers shout bulletins in tongues, Messengers and Runner Men scurry about on various errands, and small armies of Warriors, Cutters, Lancers, and so forth attack unseen enemies. Through it all there is discipline and order, maintained by the constant vigilance of Fathers, Shepherds, and Mothers.

High points of the show occur when the travelers reach India. Then Coolie spirits arrive and regular ghosts must leave. The spectators become especially alert and excited, and the activity grows stronger and more intense. Indian Kings and Queens, clad in their brilliant gowns, their bells tinkling and their bangles jingling, perform Hindu type dances to the tune of special cymbals sung in "Indian" tongues by a Coolie Cymbal Man.[17] Indian Shepherds and Mothers take charge, giving orders in the same language, and seem to be understood by the others. Coolie Maids, Hunters, and other functionaries perform actions similar to those of regular officers, but if possible even more colorful, elaborate, and strenuous. The Trip through India does not take long, however, and soon the displaced Negro ghosts return to supplant the departing Indian spirits. The Coolie functionaries then come out of trance or revert to normal laboring.

As in the country, leaders call a recess sometime before dawn so that the participants can rest and prepare for the Sun Dial, which begins as the sun rises and usually continues until two or three o'clock in the afternoon. Theatrics and pageantry are dropped for this ritual, during which the converts labor purely for the spirits and act much like rural cultists. Most bands do not even charge admission, yet the laboring is more intense and spiritually significant than during the previous night. Exhaustion comes quickly, and the converts must work in relays, so that relatively few are performing at any one time. Most of them wear ordinary clothes or their now dirty and bedraggled uniforms. Religion has replaced showmanship as the primary ceremonial motivation.

The participants rest during the afternoon, but redouble their efforts after sundown. Heavy laboring, similar in form to that of the first night but more serious and less consciously spectacular, may continue all night. The crowd returns, but with a changed attitude. Gay and frivolous the evening before, it now becomes more solemn and respectful, impressed by the power of spirits rather than by the pageantry of men. The performers in turn work harder, striving to excel in their appointed roles and please the ghosts. Theatrics fade into the background, and as a result the group travels farther and reaches greater spiritual heights than previously.

On Tuesday morning the converts rest again while helpers clean and redecorate the yard. The animal sacrifice takes place around noon and the feast four or five hours later. These rituals, too, are similar to those of rural cultists but involve more pomp and ceremony. Leaders dress in their vestments, make flowery speeches, and perform elaborate rites at the various spiritual stations with the sacrificial blood, while members stand at attention or dance slowly to soft hymns. Several animals may be killed, for there are many guests to share the meat. Bands with strong Coolie orders sometimes hold special Indian sacrifices and feasts, which differ in detail from the regular rituals. The Indian sacrifice, for example, involves prayers and speeches in tongues, peculiar methods of leading and killing the animal, and special ways of handling the blood. East Indian dishes such as roti are served at the feast in place of yams and bananas. Like regular procedures, those of the Coolies vary considerably from band to band, and the visitor can expect to see something new and interesting at each succeeding ceremony.

Officially the feast concludes the ceremony, but some of the guests often remain with their hosts to labor again on Tuesday night. At very large Tables this extra laboring may continue until morning, ending with another Sun Dial, and it may even recur on Wednesday evening. Such prolongation reflects urban economic conditions. The guests who remain are usually those who have no jobs to draw them away, and cult protocol demands that they be fed and sheltered until they leave. This puts an additional burden upon the host, but he considers it well worth the price. Persistent excitement after the feast indicates a highly successful Table and thus enhances his and his band's prestige. These considerations have even greater importance for the urban leader than for the rural one.

Leadership and Competition in the City

As in the country, the Shepherd must hold consistently successful Tables in order to achieve eminence in the cult. Urban conditions intensify this problem, however, for production of the elaborate spectacles necessary to attract the sophisticated townsfolk requires much more ingenuity, inventiveness, and showmanship than does the creation of the smaller and simpler rural ceremonies. Each urban Shepherd must strive constantly to surpass his competitors, and to do so he needs a large band. Yet, keeping followers satisfied and thus insuring their loyalty becomes more difficult than in the country, for urban cultists are needier and more dependent. They expect greater attention and more extensive benefits, and if their demands are not met they can easily transfer to another band. Moreover, rival leaders try constantly to lure them away. To maintain their support and cooperation the Shepherd needs great skill and resourcefulness. He must be a good politician, a fair psychotherapist, a sound businessman, an adept showman and, as we shall see, perhaps something of a fraud.

The task of assigning portions is illustrative. As in the country, each decision in this respect must effect some compromise among the disparate and often conflicting interests of the spirits, the appointee, other members of the band, the public, and competing leaders. The problem, difficult enough in rural areas, is compounded by the structural elaboration, the rapid change, and the competitive character of urban Pocomania. The leader must confer portions more frequently and has a wider variety of them from which to choose. Rivalry within the band is greater, and the demands of prospective officers must be balanced first against their abilities and behavioral tendencies under trance and secondly against the jealousies of other members. The public demands spectacular and interesting shows, which require that the functionaries perform a great variety of exciting dances and acts. Furthermore, impressive new portions must be devised constantly to maintain the interest of spectators. In order to attain prestige in the cult, then, the Shepherd has to show considerable ingenuity in guiding his followers toward varied and spectacular portions.

Rival leaders, however, take great pains to prevent the ambitious Shepherd from creating and delegating impressive portions promiscuously. Their opinions and attitudes constitute perhaps the thorniest facet of the problem, for anxious to improve their own relative statuses in the cult, they lose no opportunity to defame their competitor. They eagerly inspect his followers for weaknesses in their work and deficiencies in their spiritual understanding, questioning their competence and the validity of their portions. The slightest defect gives grounds for criticism and censure of both the officer and his leader, who must be able to soundly defend his decision to confer the portion. More serious errors call forth ridicule and ostracism. Furthermore, rivals seize upon any excuse to spread malicious rumors concerning the sincerity and competence of the Shepherd in question. Failure to refute such charges and to vindicate his actions can mean loss of prestige, defection of followers, and ultimate collapse of his band.

Other kinds of policy decisions elicit similar responses from rivals. Indeed, no aspect of band leadership remains exempt, and a leader need not make real mistakes to evoke criticism. Each Shepherd claims greater understanding and ability than the next and takes every opportunity to demonstrate his superiority by denouncing his competitors, usually in their absence. Considering the extensive variations among bands in the details of ideology and ceremonial policy, and the fact that Shepherds criticize one another on the basis of these differences, it will be clear that these rumors reach astounding proportions. No leader is immune, and there appear to be almost no controls on such practices. Even lowly Shepherd Boys try to cast aspersions upon famous Fathers.

It would seem to be no mean problem to evaluate the relative statuses of Pocomania leaders in the city, for the intense rivalry among them produces extremely unreliable data. A crowned Shepherd will quite often claim to be a Father, while his competitors will say that he is only an acting Shepherd. Exaggeration in one direction or the other marks almost every statement. Yet, there are definite differences in rank among these dignitaries and fairly specific criteria for determining their positions. The actual holding of a formal crown represents only one such measure, and not always a reliable one, for some leaders who have never been formally crowned have greater prestige than some crowned Fathers. The person who holds a crown can prove it by those who crowned him, but the really eminent Pocomanian is never asked for proof and thus does not need a crown. He has other methods of demonstrating his superiority.

A most interesting method of validating rank comes into play at major ceremonies when a number of Shepherds and Fathers confront each other in person. Each has been extolling himself and deriding others in their absence, and now must prove the truth of his assertions. The general outlines of their relative statuses emerge rapidly, for those with low rank suddenly become quite retiring, deferent, and inconspicuous, awaiting more auspicious opportunities--in situations devoid of challengers--to again declare their worth. The strongest Father, on the other hand, immediately takes charge, giving various orders, most of them of little consequence except in reaffirming his authority, and brooking no insubordination even from his closest rivals. Other Shepherds enjoin their inferiors, and the observer can usually discern a definite pecking order.

Each leader holds a precarious place in this order, however. Not even the strongest can afford to rest on his laurels--he must continually assert his authority. At least occasionally, he must challenge a potential usurper and defeat him in verbal combat in order to impress the others and dissuade them from questioning his supremacy. Other duels, many of them initiated by ambitious climbers in the order, occur between lesser Shepherds. These contests are strictly verbal and involve subtle boasts, delicate aspersions and taunts, cryptic statements, multisyllabic but often vague or meaningless words, and skillful maneuvering of concepts. Some examples can illustrate better than generalities the ingenuity of Pocomanians in dealing with these situations.

During a lull in a Spanish Town ceremony, Shepherd Ronnie and Shepherd Massa staged such a duel. Both had received their crowns after taking ground under Father Wood, but Massa had since moved away and joined Shepherd Luther's thriving band in Clarendon. Wood's and Luther's bands are genetically related and both carry the identification number seven. The following is a much abbreviated version of the verbal contest.

Massa: He mighty tired--me labor all night.

Ronnie: Me labor just as long, but me no tired.

Massa: Well, you work slow, not so fast as me.

Ronnie: Slow but heavy. Me go deep in spirit, and so no get tired.

Massa: Of course, you young in the work, and young man can work longer. Me older, and carry Shepherd post for longer time.

Ronnie: Some take plenty time to develop. Him with plenty talent, him develop fast and rise high in Revival work. Laboring no tire him.

(Since this is generally accepted as an incontestable fact, the spectators nodded assent and Massa had to shift his attack.)

Massa: Yes, but anybody develop most on the ground, and rise high if he do a long term. How many days did you stay on the ground?

Ronnie: Me do three weeks, twenty-one days.

Massa: No more than that? Me do three months, ninety days on the ground. (Sits back with a look of smug satisfaction.)

Ronnie (unperturbed): Yes, some no develop much even on the ground.

Massa (defensively now): A man get plenty teachment in three months; can't get so much in only three weeks. You say you do only three weeks?

Ronnie: Yes, twenty-one days. You know what that mean?

(Silence and deep thought.)

Ronnie: God have three spirits, true?

Massa: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost --three spirits.

Ronnie: And the bands number seven, true?

Massa: Daddy Wood and Shepherd Luther bands numbered seven, yes.

Ronnie: Well, three times seven make twenty-one! At this, the faces of the onlookers registered awe, and Massa, hopelessly outmaneuvered, had no rejoinder. Ronnie clearly showed himself to have the greater understanding and the higher status.

A second illustrative incident involved Father Kai, the leading Pocomania figure in Kingston, against, oddly enough, the writer. Kai had come to Spanish Town for a major Table, and evidently decided that demeaning the white man he found there would do no harm to his prestige. The writer failed to act impressed at his initial efforts, however, and refused to be intimidated. Kai then enticed him, along with several Shepherds and Fathers, into a nearby rum shop and ordered a quart of brandy. After some preliminary remarks, most of them extolling himself, he suddenly leaned across the table and demanded, "How many parts to the human body?" Taken aback, the writer stammered that it depends on how one divides it. Leaning back and sneering, Kai informed him that there are seven: belly, heart, arms, head, brain, tongue, and eyes. The writer finally began to understand and retorted that he had forgotten the lungs and the legs. Kai explained, as if to a child, that the legs have no "interdustine significance" and the lungs are merely "norodolous reposodites." Entering fully into the spirit, now, the writer agreed, but observed that the man who "fortuitously anthropomorphizes ambiguity necessitates the unencumbered facilitation of both." Kai replied in kind, and still more outrageous contentions, all delivered with great gravity ensued, while the lesser leaders sat with mouths agape and the higher ones nodded sagely. Then Kai abrupty exclaimed, "Yes sir, yes sir," to some unseen being floating outside the window, and conversed with it for several minutes in tongues. After a final "All right, sir," he said that he had just received a momentous message from a Hebrew spirit and excused himself to act upon it. With that he stood, finished his drink, and marched regally from the room, leaving the writer to pay for the brandy. It is not difficult to understand this man's fame in the cult.

The successful use of such techniques clearly involves some fraud, but it also requires quick thinking, a deep understanding of one's associates and followers, and considerable sophistication in the intricacies of Pocomania. These characteristics are valuable in other aspects of cult leadership as well. The Shepherd who has them, for example, can devise new portions and other innovations with relative abandon, for should he be challenged he can present convincing arguments to defend them. The writer does not mean to imply that leading Pocomania figures are complete frauds, or that these techniques always involve deception. On the contrary, he is convinced that most leaders act most of the time in all sincerity, even in verbal duels. Nor does he suggest that high standing in the cult can be achieved solely or even primarily in this way. Verbal proficiency cannot replace the ability to maintain large bands and hold successful Tables.

The relative standings of two Pocomania leaders become quite clear when they hold competing ceremonies, for the one with greater prestige invariably attracts more participants and larger audiences. Leaders occasionally plan ceremonial duels of this sort specifically to demonstrate or gain high status. An example occurred during the field session. A Spanish Town Mother called Chichi, who held a grudge against Shepherd Luther of southern Clarendon, challenged him by holding a Table in his territory, inviting several Shepherds and lesser cultists to help her. Luther responded confidently and rather disdainfully with a mere prayer meeting in the same town. The outcome was conclusive--despite Chichi's advantage only about forty spectators attended her Table, while Luther's meeting attracted more than three hundred. Adding insult to injury, several of Chichi's collaborators deserted her to participate in his ceremony. Luther's prestige, incidentally, rose considerably as a result of this victory.

As in the country, the Pocomania leader must demonstrate his worth by successfully applying his religious knowledge and talent to practical uses. No Shepherd can maintain followers without being able to cure them, and none can attain eminence in the cult without winning fame as a magician. Traditional Obeah, however, seems poorly suited to modern urban conditions. The city Shepherd has great difficulty obtaining the bones necessary for controlling ghosts. Those bought from grave diggers contain the duppies of unknown persons, who may prove untrustworthy or recalcitrant and thus useless or even dangerous. Even if the Shepherd comes to know and trust them his practice may suffer, for clients distrust the ghosts of strangers. Furthermore, the sophisticated townspeople are gradually losing faith in Obeah, which seems unable to solve many new, specifically urban problems. They are no longer impressed by the relatively simple techniques and materials of Obeah and have come to believe that elaborate procedures and exotic materials are needed to solve their troubles. Pocomania leaders, like other city magicians, are consequently turning more and more to an alternative method, termed Science, to achieve these practical ends.

Science derives largely from medieval European magic and comes to Jamaica in occultist books smuggled from the United States.[18] The procedures given in these books have been revised by Jamaican magicians and now vary considerably from one practitioner to the next. They involve not native, natural materials, but manufactured devices such as crystal balls and fortune-telling cards and imported synthetic ingredients with exotic or suggestive names. Druggists do thriving business in compellence powder, oil of keep-him-down, crystal water, oil of Christ, love blood, must-get-he oil, frankinsence and myrrh, King Solomon oil, Indian root pills, sweet essence of seven spirits, oil of wake-the-dead, Saturn blood, and dozens of other strange substances. More commonplace items like sulphur, camphor, laundry blue, smelling salts, and patent medicines also have Scientific uses (cf. Kerr, 1952: 139-40; Simpson, 1956: 382-95). In contrast to Obeah, Science often operates according to principles of automatic causation, without the aid of spiritual intermediaries. The ingredients and procedures themselves have magical powers. For example, oil of turn-back, when compounded properly with certain other substances and accompanied by the correct verbal formulae, ritual actions, and cabalistic drawings, can force a thief to return stolen goods, while destruction powder can wreak misfortune and prosperity oil will insure commercial success.[19]

Some Scientific techniques, on the other hand, involve the invoking of strange supernatural beings specified in the DeLawrence publications. Pocomanians identify these spirits as fallen, or "falling" angels and have incorporated them, together with the hebraic inscriptions and cabalistic designs that represent them, into the general ideological and ceremonial system of the cult (cf. Simpson, 1956: 344-45, 391-95). They come with other angels to possess the converts, and they act as tutelary deities to some cult leaders. Their acceptance promotes approval of other fallen angels, who thus become more respectable than they are in rural areas. Indeed, some urban leaders frankly admit having personal contracts with Rutibel and even with "Saint Lucifer" (cf. Moore and Simpson, 1957-8: 989). They control such spirits, of course, and use them for beneficial purposes. Ghosts also invade Scientific procedures, for although Obeah and Science are theoretically distinct they often become combined and confused in practice. Many Shepherds practice both. Babu of Spanish Town, for example, uses several duppy assistants, but has the bones and thus the permanent services of only one. He must work Science when the others are not available, for he needs one to protect his Seal. Babu considers himself a Scientist, in fact, and joins other practitioners in denouncing Obeah Men.

Suspicions and accusations of sorcery among cult leaders become even stronger and more prevalent under competitive urban conditions than in the country. Denunciations and recriminations run rampant not only between Scientists and Obeah Men, but also among the specialists in each field. Each practitioner, concerned with his own status, clientele, and cult following, questions the integrity and purposes of his rivals and attempts to undermine their reputations. As in the country, this constant censure contributes to the derogation of the cult as a whole and ultimately to that of each leader. Furthermore, the urban Shepherd's attack may backfire and damage his own status within Pocomania, for the intense rivalry promotes a greater value upon success than upon virtue. Although urban cultists deplore black magic generally, that is, they show great admiration for the Shepherd who can successfully sorcerize his rival. Some specific cases will illustrate this point.

As mentioned above Father Wood of Spanish Town has been losing many of his followers to Shepherd Luther in Clarendon. Wood does not attribute the defection of these members to his own faults, but claims that Luther has been stealing them by magical means. When other followers hear his denunciations they leave in even greater numbers, for they fear sorcery and no longer have protection against it from Wood. By his own admission, then, Wood's power is failing and Luther has become the better leader. In another case Shepherd Halti of Kingston made a Table in Spanish Town and during the ceremony became quite sick with high fever and stomach cramps, finally falling into a coma. The Kingston Obeah Man who cured him said that an evil duppy had caused the trouble. Halti later accused Shepherd Ronnie of putting the ghost on him because of the Spanish Town ceremony. The writer mentioned this to Ronnie, who smiled and said that he could have done so but did not. Ronnie was quite pleased that Halti recognized his superior powers and asked the writer not to deny the story.

Pocomanians still discuss the famous Ground Table duel of the early 1930's between Levi Johnson and Levi Jackson, the two leading Shepherds of West Kingston.[20] One of them (it is not clear which) attempted to eliminate the other by setting a Ground Table to kill him. His rival received a warning through the grapevine, however, and set a counter-Table of the same type. Such a duel ends in death for the Shepherd with lesser endurance. The first Levi, they say, dropped from exhaustion after two weeks of laboring, and the grapevine carried the news to the other. The latter labored for two additional days and then terminated his ceremony, whereupon a railroad train obliterated his rival. This story has several versions, probably all mythical. Some attribute the victory to Father Kai or to a Father Watson, and others cite straight Obeah or Science rather than a Ground Table duel as the method. The fact remains that Levi was killed by a train, and because he was a powerful Shepherd, Pocomanians have tremendous respect for the person they believe responsible.

In attempts to demonstrate their powers, many Shepherds lay claim to relatively mild and innocuous acts of non-constructive magic. During the research period Father Wood held a Table that ended in miserable failure. Shepherd Ronnie, who was angry at Wood at the time and had not attended, told the writer later that he had set Obeah in the yard and thereby kept the spirits away. Another time, Ronnie visited a Table given by Babu, but said that he had to leave early to attend a wake. As he turned to go a spirit possessed him, however, and he labored in trance until noon the following day. Babu later confided to the writer that he had used Science to detain Ronnie and force him to participate.

Clearly, the Shepherd without powerful magic stands little chance of achieving real success in Pocomania. Not only does he face constant danger from rivals, but he cannot protect or retain followers or hold successful ceremonies. He must remain an assistant to a stronger figure, and can at best attain leadership of a subsidiary band. The Shepherd who wins renown as a Scientist or Obeah Man, on the other hand, can usually build a considerable following, provided he has the other necessary attributes of leadership. If he can maintain a large organization with sub-bands and assistant Shepherds he becomes eligible for a Father's crown. To receive it, however, he must convince other Fathers and important Shepherds, all of them competitors, of his qualifications. For this he needs a reputation for magical prowess strong enough to worry them, for they will agree to crown him only if they have some fear of the consequences of refusing.

Even in the city, Father is the highest generally recognized Pocomania office. Leaders often claim to be Bishops, Controller Men, or other exalted dignitaries in the cult, but few can substantiate their claims. Some Fathers validate such titles by gaining effective control over various lesser bands and nominally autonomous Shepherds, and occasionally a forceful personality manages to integrate most of the groups in West Kingston, but these super-band organizations invariably collapse upon the death of their founders. Generally speaking, then, there exists no enduring formal synthesis of urban Pocomania above the level of the band. Nevertheless, the Father who gains fame as a powerful magician, who can win the support and cooperation of other leaders, and who can innovate successfully, wields tremendous influence in the cult.

Adaptations and Prospects of Urban Pocomania

Pressures toward acculturation operate as relentlessly in the city as in the country, and some urban Pocomanians have responded to them in much the same ways as rural cultists. The more successful metropolitan bands, however, have reacted quite differently. Rather than stubbornly maintaining obsolescent traditional patterns or adopting Zion Revivalistic characteristics, they have emphasized and elaborated the pageantry and theatrics of ceremonies. This type of response is directly related to social conditions in the crowded city, which offers thousands of potential spectators and converts but also fosters hundreds of competing religious groups. The Pocomania band does not appeal to the religious sentiments of most people and consequently must lure them to ceremonies with other enticements. It must draw large crowds, for the cult has a poor reputation and thus a low rate of conversion. The urban leaders have found a solution to this problem in the production of entertaining spectacles.

Each year, under growing Christian influence, the proportion of spectators who can be converted decreases and the shows must grow more impressive. Furthermore, the various Pocomania bands compete with one another, and those which produce the most interesting performances draw the largest crowds and thus obtain the most conversions. This leads to continual innovation and rapid change, not only in the purely ceremonial but also in the structural aspects of the cult. Indeed, the most striking and perhaps the most valuable of these elaborations consist in the creation of literally dozens of colorful new portions. An outstanding example of this development is the spectacular Indian movement, which began as a simple invention of one leader and has since become the cult's stellar attraction. The exciting, highly varied, and always changing performances of portion-holders make Pocomanian ceremonial a major source of recreation for the depressed and bored lower-class townspeople, and this constitutes a basic element in the comparative success of metropolitan bands.

This theatrical emphasis has made urban Pocomania less religious, in a sense, but beneath the facade of histrionics lie the same beliefs and values as were found in rural groups. Once seduced by the dramatic ceremonies into conversion, the neophyte becomes fully involved in the underlying religion. He also receives many services--health insurance, medical and magical aid, economic support, and strong leaders upon whom to place emotional dependence. Pocomania's adjustment to the needs of townspeople can be seen most clearly in the custom of taking ground, whereby the destitute convert can receive even his sustenance for limited periods of time. Moreover, the member finds social acceptance and opportunity for advancement in the cult. Achieving a portion not only lifts him out of the crowd and gives him the sense of individuality that lower-class Jamaicans desire so greatly, but it also allows him to express his emotions and makes him a center of attraction at ceremonies.

Pocomania, then, has made a relatively successful adaptation--if not a strictly religious one--to metropolitan conditions and serves important, distinctive functions both for its members and for the general public. As long as these services are needed--as long as the city remains economically depressed, socially unstable, and devoid of adequate medical. educational, and recreational facilities--it appears at first to have reasonably good prospects for survival. Yet, the intense inter-band competition that made this success possible has disadvantages. It fosters distrust and hostility among cult leaders, prevents cult integration, and engenders malicious accusations and rumors that further the cult's notoriety. Like the other religions we have examined, urban Pocomania has adapted to its social environment, but it has not adapted closely enough. Despite its adjustment to the needs of the people, it cannot withstand the growing influences of Christianity, and it seems destined for ultimate extinction.

Chapter 9

WIDER IMPLICATIONS

The Subject in Perspective

Upon individual analysis, Pocomania and the other movements discussed earlier appear as independent religions complete in themselves. Yet, when viewed together in broad perspective, they become merely cults and sects--parts of a larger religious panorama. They remain restricted both socially and historically, have many genetic and functional interrelationships, and seem to express particular, transitory variations on more general and lasting themes. This final chapter aims to provide such perspective. Concerned with the larger picture as a whole, it deals with these interrelationships and with the nature and significance of the themes thus expressed.

The main purpose here is to show that Jamaican religion, with all its diversity and conflict, forms an integrated system and that particular patterns, complexes, and movements become fully understandable only as parts of this total configuration. Anthropologists commonly deal with just this kind of problem in simpler, more stable cultures, and our final attention centers on the theoretical and methodological implications of adapting certain anthropological approaches and concepts to the study of highly complex and variable institutions. The task necessarily involves discussing the dynamic aspects of Jamaican religion as well as its structural principles, and we turn first to some processes and factors in the island's religious development.

Religious Change and Continuity

The facts treated in this study disprove conclusively the idea, still widely accepted, that religion is necessarily a conservative institution. Jamaican history abounds with religious innovations; every major period saw important new developments and produced groups which readily--in some cases even eagerly--changed their beliefs, ritual behaviors, and cult or sect affiliations. The present day is no exception. Ras Tafari has blossomed and spread within the past three decades and continues to grow and evolve, and it would be difficult to find anywhere an institution more devoted to innovation than is urban Pocomania.

These manifold and diverse changes in Jamaican religion may be reduced to two basic types or processes; the acceptance of new patterns and the adaptation--revision, reapplication, or recombination--of existing ones. Several lines of evidence bear out the point that both have their roots in the continuing search for solutions to human problems. First, the highest rates of change occurred during periods of marked anxiety and discontent. Thus the early slaves, torn from their homes and thrown with strangers into a new and frustrating life, produced a profusion of ghost cults and Myal movements, and the crises of readjustment following emancipation fostered a series of developments that amounted to a veritable religious climax. Similarly, groups facing the most dissatisfying social and economic conditions showed the strongest tendency to change their religious customs. Slaves, not freedmen, supported the missionaries most enthusiastically, and most of the significant innovations and movements observed arose among the oppressed, depressed, or socially rejected.

Content analyses of particular religious complexes give the point additional support. Every development studied was clearly a response to the problems of its sponsors. The early Myal cult, with its frank emphasis on revolt and its safeguards against the weapons of planters, makes sense only as an attempt by desperate men to cast off the intolerable bonds of slavery. The militant Ras Tafari movement is a comparable reaction to present conditions that aggressive urban outcasts find equally unbearable. Proponents of the Great Myal Procession attacked sorcerers who were believed responsible for the many troubles of post-emancipation life, and the Bedwardites fought the despairs of a later generation. We have seen in detail how religious practices, beliefs, and affiliations in one Jamaican village reflect the difficulties peculiar to different social groups, and how Pocomania has adapted to the divergent conditions of rural and urban living.

The emergence of new problems constitutes only one source of religious change and diversification. Another consists in alternative approaches, stemming both from individual inventiveness and from the influence of different traditions, to the solution of existing problems. The early slaves sought baptism as a new means of protection against sorcery, while their descendants saw in Christianity a method, more promising than Myalism or Obeah, for escaping from slavery and achieving other material benefits. Indeed, what are Obeah, Science, and faith healing but different ways of attacking similar perennial ills!

Many such alternatives prove inadequate, and this constitutes a third factor in religious change. Examples of the trial and error process occur throughout Jamaican history, the most striking, perhaps, being the Native Baptist movement, the Great Myal Procession, the 1860-61 Revival, and the Bedwardite craze. All were attempts to correct the deficiencies of orthodox Christian solutions to native problems. The continual rise and fall of independent sect and cult groups today further illustrates this process. On the other hand, highly successful innovations may also stimulate important new developments, as the growth of the Indian order in urban Pocomania demonstrates.

Another factor, and one which complicates matters considerably, concerns the well-known fact that solutions to old problems often create new ones, thus necessitating still more solutions. Once started, the process seems to spiral endlessly, and we have seen it operating in many religious developments. It was dramatically manifested during the early period of slavery and again after emancipation, when the practice of Obeah promoted heightened fear of sorcery, which led in turn to increased Obeah, still greater fears, and finally to the rise of major anti-sorcery movements. Similar reactions on a somewhat smaller scale occur in modern Pocomania.

Finally, the effects of acculturators must be considered. In general, historical analysis confirms Smith's hypothesis that the amount of change in a given institution varies with the extent of acculturative pressures exerted upon it.[1] During the early period of slavery, when whites focused their efforts on secular matters, slave religion remained quite African and saw relatively few acculturative changes. Later, under pressure from missionaries, it underwent great transformations and acquired many Christian features. Those groups which were subjected to the strongest pressures accepted the most extensive religious changes. Thus, the early house servants became more Christianized than did the field hands, and in later times religious acculturation was maximal in areas of greatest missionary activity. The heaviest pressures of all, in the Moravian communities and in the free villages supported by the churches, produced the most thorough changes.

The hypothesis has limited validity, however. Acculurative pressures upon specific religious patterns and complexes had highly variable results. Some, like those against Obeah and those supporting Christian sexual rules, failed dismally. Some actually reinforced native traditions, as when early missionary attacks against the "devil-worship" of Obeah Men confirmed beliefs in hostile spirits and in the need for Obeah to combat them. Others elicited changes, often unexpected and undesired ones, far out of proportion to their strength. The Native Baptist movement and the Great Revival, for example, extravagantly outstripped the efforts of the missionaries who instigated them. The cumulative effects of acculturative pressures are clear, but particular reactions to them depend in large part upon the other factors discussed above. Pressures operate in indirect and complex ways; they do not in themselves seem to produce religious changes, but rather create new problems which in turn foster the acceptance of new solutions.

Through all this change and diversification run lines of continuity. The most significant of these are the basic assumptions and principles that form the religious world view--that underlie particular beliefs and ritual practices and give meaning and purpose to them. These themes determine the perception and interpretation of problems and limit the kinds of solutions available. Learned indirectly and early in life, they remain largely covert and unverbalized and show remarkable resistance to change (cf. Simpson and

Hammond, 1960). Two main sets of them, the African and the Protestant Christian, guided the general development of Jamaican religion.

As predicted in the introductory chapter, the basic themes of African religion, which slaves from most tribes held in common, changed hardly at all in pre-missionary Jamaica. New spirits and cults arose to replace old ones, but polytheism and cult specialization persisted. Such features as the monistic outlook, the materialism of ceremonies, and the doctrine of amoral spiritual power survived countless adaptive changes. Techniques of dealing with supernatural beings altered radically, but the premise that spirits must be pacified and controlled was never seriously questioned. For the vast majority of people, Christianity remained one cult among many, dedicated to serving the white man's gods. In short, there were many developments within the general religious system, but few changes of the system itself.

In later times these African assumptions and principles withstood powerful Christian influences. The first subjects of missionary proselytization, however eager to learn, found the Christian world view with its emphasis on sin, salvation, and subservience to a single God, completely alien. Their own philosophy conditioned their perception of new ideas, and they could only reinterpret missionary teachings to fit it. They passed these reinterpretations on to their children, and until well after emancipation the religion of most Jamaicans remained basically African. Thus, the 1841 Myal procession, which enlisted thousands of missionary followers, was little else than an African cult clothed in superficial Christian forms. So also were many Native Baptist movements.

African themes became progressively weaker and less prevalent during subsequent decades, but still they persisted. Even today they influence the religious thinking and behavior of cultists and many other people. What is more, they give direction and significance to particular, overt beliefs and practices and thus provide a basis for retention of more conspicuous Africanisms. Animal sacrifice, ghost worship, and Obeah procedures, for example, make sense only in terms of these assumptions and could hardly have survived in their absence.

Protestant Christian premises and principles diffused hesitantly and unevenly, however inexorably. Church membership grew rapidly in response to missionary campaigns for emancipation and other practical benefits, and a strong value on being Christian arose, but internalization of Christian values lagged far behind. Only those persons who were exposed to the new world view from childhood, such as mulatto townspeople and Moravian followers, seemed to accept it fully. Many others, however, assimilated particular Christian premises, for example those concerning sin, absolute good and evil, and the "one true religion," and created various syntheses of the old and the new. The result was a series of religious groups which, in terms of basic orientations as well as of overt beliefs and practices, fell along a continuum from highly African to orthodox Christian.

As missionary efforts expanded, as converts became native apostles, and as people became more involved in the Western socio-economic system, the new principles and assumptions spread with increasing rapidity. The balance of the continuum shifted. Orthodox Christians grew in numbers, near-Christian movements like Bedwardism arose under native leaders, and the proportion of conservative "Africans" steadily dwindled. Intermediate groups moved gradually toward greater orthodoxy or lost members to more progressive movements. Traditional patterns were reinterpreted to fit new assumptions, the reverse of a former trend. Some Afro-Christian syntheses endured for a time, but few were really stable. Acceptance of new premises led to ideological contradictions and value conflicts, to continual attempts at resolving them, and in turn to cumulative assimilation of other new ideas. The process goes on still, as our analysis of present-day cults has shown, and the interplay of Christian and African assumptions and principles continues to exert great influence upon the organizational aspects of religion in Jamaica.

The Jamaican Religious System

In the introductory chapter it was noted that polytheistic and monotheistic world views promote quite different types of social organization in religion. The cult systems of Africa have little in common with the sect structures found in Protestant Christian countries. What organizational forms develop, we asked, when two such contrasting orders meet under conditions of acculturation? The general hypothesis advanced was that some sort of compound system will emerge, and the analysis seems to confirm it. Religion in Jamaica has evolved an inter-group structure which combines the cooperative features of African cult organization with the competitive patterns of Christian sectarianism.

The system includes both cults and sectarian bodies. As in Africa, the cults are polytheistic, each specializing in the service of certain types of spirits while recognizing the importance of other groups and deities. Although rivalries occur, the general effect is one of mutual acceptance and of cooperation in controlling supernatural forces. These principles also govern relationships within particular cults. Local units handle different spirits and help one another in ceremonies, and individual members contribute specialized functions to the operation of the ceremonial group. Significantly, the cults center among people who show the least acculturation not only in religion but also in secular life. These people remain very poor, have stable socio-economic statuses, and see few opportunities for individual advancement. They need strong cooperative social ties for security --indeed for their very subsistence--and cult patterns reflect their concern with establishing and maintaining such bonds.

Sectarian bodies, in contrast, are fundamentally competitive. All worship the same God, but none recognizes real value in the others. Each repudiates the methods and doctrinal variations of its rivals and strives to advance its own favorite themes. Both varieties--independent sects and established sects, or churches--emphasize individual achievement and lack the specialized statuses which in cults promote cooperative endeavor. Independent sects stress the goal of personal salvation, while churches seem to foster more concern over social prestige. People who favor these groups tend to be more deeply involved than cultists in the competitive themes of Western culture. They recognize at least possibilities for social and economic advancement and to some extent accept the premise that individual effort is the key to success. As their sectarian propensities indicate, they tend to eschew the cooperative ties that impede such mobility and to seek security in personal accomplishment.

The compound nature of the Jamaican religious system lies only partly in its inclusion of both types of organization. There is also a subtle blending of cult and sect principles in the general character of group relationships. In some respects the entire structure resembles a cult system.

People of all social levels believe at least implicitly in various spirits and seem relieved that cultists pacify and control potentially dangerous ones. Indeed, some independent sects indicate greater interest in thwarting Satan than specifically in worshiping God. Sectarians use the necromantic services of cult leaders, just as cultists sometimes patronize Protestant faith healers. Many persons simultaneously follow diverse religious creeds, and some churches, like the Baptists of Zion Hill, even foster cult activities. All groups work for the general welfare, and all through their ceremonies give enjoyment and other gratifications to nonmembers. To some extent, then, the various bodies serve complementary social functions and thus maintain, if often inadvertently, cooperative relations.

In other respects the system shows a markedly sectarian character. Churches, independent sects, and cults compete for eminence, and the different bodies within each category engage in even stronger rivalries. Each group considers the others somehow mistaken or inferior. Churchgoers deplore the emotionalism of independent sects and cults, members of independent sects denounce church formalism and cult paganism, and cultists deride the pretentions and limitations of monotheistic groups. Open deprecations mark relationships among independent sects, while more subtle mutual criticisms occur among churches. Cultists, who also consider themselves Christians, accuse each other of worshiping false prophets or evil spirits. Even within particular cults there are variant, sect-like groups which vie for dominance.

In many ways this rivalry dominates and overshadows the cooperative features of the system. Not all of it, however, stems directly from sectarian religious premises; it also has roots in certain general principles of Jamaican social organization and may have originated in the mutually hostile tribal groups of the early slaves. Analysis of Orange River society, at least, reveals in most institutions highly competitive inter-group structures marked by factionalism and mutual suspicion. People tend to distrust authority figures, but at the same time depend heavily upon leaders who offer various benefits. Leaders enhance this ambivalence. Each tries to gain prestige at the expense of the others, disparaging them and extolling his own merits. In this way ambitious lesser leaders create factions in larger groups, and when troubles arise each faction projects the blame on its rivals. These proclivities appear strongest in voluntary associations and become amplified in religion, where they are most directly reinforced by sectarian influences.

Definite checks and balances control these power struggles. The successful leader has to prove his competence. To retain his followers he must satisfy their expectations and maintain cohesion among them. Factions must be integrated and the talents of ambitious underlings turned to constructive ends. Also, he depends to some extent upon other leaders and has to form cooperative alliances with them. For this he needs their respect. He cannot give them sound cause for criticism, and must be able to rise above any charges leveled against him. Such checks and balances maintain a precarious equilibrium among the groups involved. They also insure cultural continuity, for no leader can deviate too far from established norms without inviting destructive criticism.

These principles operate at all levels of organization in religion, forming a series of interconnected structural systems which have what can be termed negative integration--they are based upon fission and rivalry, but nevertheless constitute coherent, functional wholes. This point becomes clearest, perhaps, in the analysis of Pocomania, where these principles have been institutionalized and applied to local group structures, regional and urban confederations, and the total cult organization. As we have seen, they also affect many relationships among the different cults and sects, pervading the general religious system. Indeed, to some extent they dominate the structure--they underlie not only its integration but also its basic dynamic process.

This continual fissioning gives Jamaican religion a built-in mechanism of adjustment and change. Particular bodies may remain conservative or standardized, but they repeatedly foster ambitious sub-leaders who organize divergent factions. Some of these factions eventually become independent splinter groups, evolving variant beliefs and practices. Many die out and others must enter cooperative alliances in order to survive, but successful ones may expand and produce still new offshoots. Prime examples of the latter are the Native Baptists, who branched off from missionary bodies and gave rise in turn to the development of Bedwardism, Zion Revival, and Pocomania. Thus, the general religious configuration and the group constellations within it change constantly, controlled by the checks and balances discussed above.

Viewed generally, the process is an adaptive one. Splinter groups reflect the ambitions of individuals, but they also constitute responses to changing and diversifying social problems. Those which survive clearly meet needs and wants left unfilled by their parent bodies. The Native Baptists thus adjusted missionary teachings to the exigencies of great numbers of slaves who could find relief neither in orthodox Christianity nor in African religious traditions. Many modern independent sects arise and function similarly, as reactions to the alien norms and inflexible standards of established churches. They develop under native leaders who break away from these bodies and devise religious patterns which are more adequate for solving the problems of partially acculturated Jamaicans. Cults produce correspondingly adaptive offshoots, as the responses of Pocomania groups to urban conditions show.

The process also promotes organizational adaptation to ideological change and thus facilitates religious acculturation. As Christian premises and values find wider acceptance, traditional beliefs and practices become less satisfying and people shift continually to more Westernized groups. The prestige of Christianity and the concomitant depreciation of activities considered pagan increase this tendency. Thus, conservative cult leaders lose their followers to those who work out ideological and ceremonial forms which more closely approximate or resemble Christian patterns. The factions of progressive sub-leaders grow constantly stronger and in time gain independence, only to decline in turn as acculturation proceeds and still more Christianized groups develop. In this way the conservative Convince cult has been reduced to a small collection of leaders with virtually no followers, while Zion Revival has grown continually more sectarian in character and retained considerable popularity.

Pocomania presents a more complex picture, showing various responses to these conflicting forces of tradition, adaptation, and acculturation. Some leaders cling to tradition and are going the way of Convince. Others, like Walker of Orange River, succumb to Christian influences, retaining more followers but merging into Zion Revivalism. Still others, particularly in the city, reject both tradition and Christianity and emphasize adaptation through invention of new forms and through secularization. Thus Pocomania, in its persisting search for solutions to human problems, epitomizes the dynamism and diversity of the larger religious system.

This entire analysis has run somewhat counter to commonly accepted theories of social structure. Following Durkheim, such theories tend to assume that healthy social systems have stable, positive integration marked by internal consistency, harmony, and solidarity. Component parts function to maintain the balance and unity of the whole. Features like factionalism and dissension are regarded as symptoms of social pathology or anomie, arising from "dysfunctional" elements which disrupt the structure.[2] From this viewpoint the Jamaican religious sytem, if indeed recognized as such, would be considered highly disorganized.[3] Yet, as we have seen, it need not be. According to the model developed here it has a negative integration--one based upon a shifting balance of power among opposing forces, ideas, and groups. This integration is maintained not in spite of, but rather in terms of factionalism and rivalry, diversity and contradiction, fission and discord. Indeed, "dysfunctional" patterns such as disagreement, mutual hostility, and dispute have crucial importance for defining inter-group relationships and thus giving coherence to the system.

Theories which assume positive integration picture healthy social structures as culturally stable, running smoothly and having no need for innovation. Frequent cultural changes are usually interpreted as functions of defects or disturbances in the system; they operate either constructively, working to restore balance and harmony, or destructively, creating further derangement and disorder.[4] The analysis presented here gives no such impression of change. As a negatively integrated system, Jamaican religion has a dynamic equilibrium and inherently, normally, produces innovation. Each new faction and splinter group develops new ideas, new ways of solving problems, and procedures for handling new situations. Such change is neither integrative nor disintegrative--neither constructive nor destructive for the system. It is simply a process of continual adaptation to shifting and diversifying conditions of life. Some such mechanism of neutral change must operate in modern social systems, it seems, if they are not all to be considered pathological.

Through these permutations in content, the general structure of Jamaican religion remains relatively constant; new groups resemble their predecessors and stand in much the same relationships with other bodies. Still, structural changes do occur within the system, in the kinds of organizations which compose it. We have seen how cults, through formation of splinter groups and attenuation of conservative elements, gradually die out on the one hand or merge into sectarianism on the other. This is basically an acculturative process engendered by the progressive assimilation of Western values and the growth of Christian prestige. Non-acculturative structural developments of Christian groups--of independent sects and churches--remain to be considered.

Sect and Church in Jamaica

Small, local sects like the Church of God and the Jesus Only group of Orange River have been forming in Jamaica since the days of the first missionaries and occur in great numbers throughout the island. They develop under nonprofessional leaders as offshoots from larger denominations and characteristically become independent, adapting to the needs and values of the peasant and laboring classes. Highly individualistic, emotional, and ascetic, they constitute a type of religious body quite distinct structurally from either cults or the formalistic, officially organized churches (cf. Weber, 1930; Troeltsch, 1931; Niebuhr, 1929; esp. 17-18; Becker, 1932: 613-42; Yinger, 1946). Such independent sects appear commonly in most Protestant Christian countries and have attracted a good deal of attention among sociologists. The many studies about them, however, give a rather different impression of their structural dynamics than the one conceived in the present work.

Sociological interest in sect dynamics has concentrated mainly on the structural development of existing sects and has tended to neglect the equally significant process by which such groups originate. Indeed, work on this latter subject has progressed little beyond the pioneer studies of Troeltsch and Niebuhr and still reflects the bias of these historical theologians.[5] The basic premise lies in what Troeltsch called the "dilemma of the church." Nowhere is this idea, and the bias contained in it, expressed more delightfully than in Niebuhr's opening words:

> "Christendom has often, achieved apparent success by ignoring the precepts of its founder. The church, as an organization interested in self-preservation and in the gain of power, has sometimes found the counsel of the Cross quite as inexpedient as have national and economic groups. In dealing with such major social evils as war, slavery, and social inequality, it has discovered convenient ambiguities in the letter of the Gospels which enabled it to violate their spirit and to ally itself with the prestige and power those evils had gained in their corporate organization. In adapting itself to the conditions of a civilization which its founder had bidden it to permeate with the spirit of divine love, it found that it was easier to give to Caesar the things belonging to Caesar if the examination of what might belong to God were not too closely pressed" (Niebuhr, 1929: 3).

Churches, then, in order to maintain their influence, commonly serve the interests of the dominant groups of society. In so doing they must compromise the Christian ideals of brotherhood and equality and neglect the needs of common folk and minority groups. Independent sects, in this view, are reactions to such neglect. They arise among the poor, the socially rejected, the disinherited, as protests against the abuses of established churches, expressing class conflict on the one hand and reasserting the basic values and ideals of Christianity on the other.[6]

Behind this interpretation of sect formation lies the assumption of an absolute, unchanging Christian ethic at war with varying, diversified secular interests. Religion in this view is not, or should not be, a part or expression of culture, but rather a force for controlling and unifying culture. Its adaptation to, or "compromise with," worldly demands can lead only to the intensification of social evils and adversities. Even modern sociologists without such theological bias retain this assumption of conflict. They depict independent sects not simply as responses to given socio-cultural environments, but as reactions to incongruities between culture and religion, to social and economic inequalities, and to class antagonisms. In short, they regard sect formation as a symptom of social disorganization--of defects and maladjustments in a positively integrated system. Furthermore, this concern with the causes of independent sects tends to obscure the processes by thich they form. Sociologists recognize that such groups germinate in schism, but usually portray them as simply arising in dissent.[7]

The independent sects of Jamaica could easily be interpreted in the above terms. They develop among groups with little economic or political power and little chance of gaining it, and they do contain elements of protest against elite classes and established churches. Basically, however, they are simply adaptations to particular kinds of socio-cultural conditions. Like cults, they express the social and religious values, and attack the special problems, of various Jamaican groups. Seen as units of a negatively integrated system, they constitute responses to and expressions of cultural diversity rather than reactions to or symptoms of social disorganization. They do not as a rule oppose the dominant values of society, nor do they vindicate the claims of "disinherited" classes; they tend to represent relatively respectable and optimistic groups. Their "protest" centers mainly on the inadequacies and alien qualities, not the abuses, of established churches, and most of them give only lip service to the basic ideal of Christianity. Indeed, there seem to be nearly as many "Christian" ideals as there are independent sects, which may indicate not only divergent adaptation but also a strong desire to attain distinctiveness (cf. Wilson, 1961: 5-6, 317-37). Moreover, the processes of factionalism and fission by which independent sects form do not function as corrective mechanisms, but are standard and normal in Jamaica, reflecting and encouraging diversification. The founders of such groups are seldom rebellious misfits, but usually esteemed social leaders who in accepted ways are working to enhance their prestige and power (cf. Wilson, 1961: 338-41; Yinger, 1957: 136-40).

The proliferation of independent sects constitutes only one phase of structural development in modern Western religion. Sociologists have shown repeatedly that such groups, if they survive, tend to become steadily more secure, formalized, and respectable, growing finally into established denominations like those from which they spring. This shift, students agree, is in part a natural, inherent development. The training of children and second-generation officials promotes a codification of doctrine and a concomitant tempering of emotional fervor. As the group expands, the enthusiasm and spontaneous accord of the original members gives way to standardized ritual and formal organization. External factors, however, are usually considered more important. Most writers view the process as one of "secularization" in which independent sects gradually compromise their religious ideals and accommodate to the prevailing social order. Some members prosper economically and ascend the scale of social class, gaining the acceptance of society and in turn accepting its secular values. Their reasons for revolt thus dissolved, these people either desert the independent sect for churches or else, using the influence gained from their wealth, begin to remold it in accordance with their new positions and standards. The sect loses its dissenting character, attracts more respectable and affluent members, and finally becomes an established church. Members who remain poor and dissatisfied drop out to join other independent sects or to form fresh dissent groups, thus continuing the revolt and beginning the cycle anew.[8]

Jamaican independent sects show little evidence of such development. None of the Native Baptist groups seem to have grown into churches, nor have the sects of Orange River moved noticeably in this direction. Even Bedwardism, the largest and most promising of the Jamaican religious movements, reverted to independent local units after the death of its founder. Indeed, the only churchlike groups known to the writer are branches of organized English and American bodies. It is possible that some independent sects, particularly in the city, have experienced a shift towards church status, but most of them maintain their basic sectarian characteristics. Their susceptibility to fission nullifies any inherent proclivity to expand and become formalized. Sub-leaders seldom accept fully the original doctrines, but tend to create their own variations and form splinter groups. Strong leaders like Bedward, and like Elder Thomas of Orange River, merely delay this bifurcation.[9] The training of children has little effect.

Young people are exposed to various creeds, especially when members of their families represent distinct religious bodies, and show considerable individuality in choosing their preferences.

This lack of structural change also reflects the Jamaican social and economic environment. It is significant that most studies of sect development have been made in the United States, where an expanding economy engenders a good deal of social mobility. Lower-class people aspire to middle-class status and many achieve it, reinforcing the aspirations and hopes of others. Such mobility is quite helpful, if not necessary, for the growth of independent sects into churches (cf. Wilson, 1961: 342-3). It does not occur in Jamaica, which has a stabler economy and rigid lines of social stratification, and where the great majority of people remain permanently relegated to lower-class positions. An occasional individual may prosper and gain status among his fellows, but even then can rarely hope to win acceptance into elite circles. He can only center his aspirations on his children and have them educated accordingly. The independent sect cannot help him in attaining this goal, and he usually turns to one of the more prestigious churches. Under such conditions sects have little opportunity to accommodate to middle-class norms and standards. The few members who could further the process become alienated by the very qualities that give them this ability, and independent sects can only continue to express the values and attack the problems of the stable, lower-class adherents who remain faithful. Even large and secure sects, then, cannot become churches in the strict sense of the term.[10]

This analysis does not deny the possibility of future church formation in Jamaica. It does show that such formation is not natural or inevitable, but depends largely upon the socio-cultural environment. In time, with economic development and increasing social mobility, some Jamaican independent sects may well grow into established denominations (cf. Pfautz, 1955). Even then they will hardly lose their identities, as the sociologists imply, but will surely maintain or evolve their own distinctive characteristics as other churches have. The concern of sociologists with independent sect and church types has the effect of obscuring the manifold differences in content among the various groups within each category and of restricting analyses of change to the single dimension. Gross oversimplification results. The diversity of relgion in modern society reflects the heterogeneity and complexity of society itself and is far too great to be explained solely in terms of economic and social class factors (cf. Wilson, 1961: 4-6). The development of churches cannot be simply a process of accommodation to the unified values of an undifferentiated elite, but must, like sect formation, involve adaptation to the particular values, needs, and problems of different groups within the larger social class.

Interpreting the process as "secularization" distorts the picture even more. Just as widely variant independent sects cannot all be pure revelations of the basic Christian ideal, so their growth into churches cannot constitute mere contamination of this ideal. Independent sects as well as churches adjust to the secular norms and standards of the groups which they represent, and to judge which are the more religious is meaningless as well as objectively impossible. Religion always expresses culture, and in heterogeneous societies necessarily reflects sub-cultural differences. Only by viewing religious institutions as adaptations to the diversified conditions of modern life can their rich variability be appreciated and rendered fully meaningful. Recognition and understanding of this variability is requisite for the portrayal of independent sects and churches in true perspective, not as mere types or as symptoms of social evils, but rather as interrelated, functioning elements of a larger structural system.

Conclusion

Dealing with widely variable phenomena like those described above is not easy. The great complexities and heterogeneity of modern life present a particularly troublesome problem to the anthropologist. Any investigation that he attempts involves a compromise at the outset. Having limited resources he cannot, as his training urges, carry out a holistic and yet detailed examination of a massive, highly diversified culture. He must in some way limit the scope of his study. The method followed here, consisting basically in the analysis of social and cultural variations within a single institution, has proved to be in several ways a useful approach to this general problem.

First, concentrating on one institution permits intensive utilization of historical data, not merely as background material, but for tracing in detail the development of particular complexes and movements. This clarifies the many factors and processes involved in cultural change and shows how they operate in relation to one another. Secondly, attention to variations engenders comparison of the responses made by people of kindred cultural backgrounds to similar and to different conditions of life. Such procedure provides a solid empirical foundation for pattern generalization and inhibits the tendency to draw broad inferences about the culture from restricted or uneven evidence. Finally, the wide institutional framework preserves to some degree the valuable holistic perspective of anthropology, helping to avert the particularistic errors that so often mark studies of single groups and associations. Thus, each cult and sect studied in the present work appeared not only as a distinct entity in its own right and as an expression of particular sub-cultural values, but also as an integral unit of a larger religious configuration. The greatest theoretical significance of these groups, moreover, emerged from analysis of their interrelationships within the wider institution.

Organizing and interpreting the myriad variations in an institution like Jamaican religion tends to reveal deficiencies in concepts designed to explain less complicated social and cultural phenomena. The most important such case encountered here concerns the widely accepted idea of positive integration--the assumption that healthy socio-cultural systems must exhibit characteristics like harmony, stability, and solidarity. This idea may seem useful in studying traditional anthropological subject matter--small, isolated tribes with simple, conservative cultures--but it contains a bias against heterogeneity and change. Despite its endorsement by sociologists, it is hopelessly inadequate for dealing with the continual development and diversification found in modern countries and acculturating groups. Indeed, theoretical models based upon it make the advancement of civilization, with its increasing rates of change, appear not as a process of growth, but rather as one of progressive pathological deterioration. Such a view can hardly be valid --imagine a similar one applied to biological evolution! Change and divergence are as natural in societies as in species, and the construction of some kind of conceptual model which acknowledges this fact is indispensable for a reasonably objective interpretation of dynamic, heterogeneous socio-cultural systems.

The model of negative integration, which stresses a fluctuating balance of power among opposing leaders, ideas, and organizations, represents an initial attempt toward solving this problem. It grew out of our final analysis and thus remains rather crude and undeveloped, but even so has proved extremely valuable for bringing order and understanding to a highly complex institution which would otherwise appear quite disorganized and confused. Viewed in terms of this framework, the factionalism, rivalry, dissension, and rapid change characteristic of religion in Jamaica become not only important aids to adaptation and acculturation, but also crucial factors for maintaining the coherence of intergroup relationships. Jamaican religion emerges as an intelligible, integrated system, and the change and diversification which occur within it stand revealed as natural and normal processes.

Finally, the general approach followed here should be useful in other contexts. The model of negative integration seems capable of refinement and development, and of application to various complex institutions and changing societies. Suitably revised, it can perhaps add new perspectives even to the study of primitive cultures, since most of them are changing under the impact of modern civilization and none have the uniformity or stability that anthropologists once assumed.

NOTES

Chapter 1

1. Cf. Ford (1942); Malinowski (1944: 36-42). See also the analysis of concepts of culture in Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952: esp. 55-60).

2. See, for example, Frazer (1915, I: 52-243); Freud (1957: 19-50); Malinowski (1948: 1-18).

3. Freud (1957: 11-32). Generally similar conclusions, but stated in very different terms, appear in Durkheim (1947: 416-47); Malinowski (1948: 19-50); and Radcliffe-Brown (1952: 153-77).

4. Firth (1951); Malinowski (1948: 19-70); Radcliffe-Brown (1952: 133-77, 205-11). For an example of such a system see Radcliffe-Brown (1922).

5. See, for example, Troeltsch (1931); Niebuhr (1957); Pope (1942); cf. Weber (1930).

6. Basic reorganizations of religious systems, which usually occur in acculturation situations, often appear quite suddenly in the form of specific "nativistic" or "revitalization" movements. For recent analyses and interpretations of such phenomena see Wallace (1956) or Worsley (1957).

7. See especially Herskovits (1937a, 1937b, 1943).

8. See, for example, Herskovits (1937b, 1941, 1943); Herskovits and Herskovits (1947); Bascom (1941, 1950, 1952); Moore (1954); Moore and Simpson (1957-8); Simpson (1940a, 1940b, 1946, 1951, 1955a, 1956, 1960, 1962a).

9. For recent summaries and critiques of these methods and concepts, see M. G. Smith (1956b: 11-26; 1960).

10. Anonymous (1934: 391-5); De Lisser (1913: 108-10); Williams (1932: 108-236); (1934: 23-108). A short summary of Williams' thesis appears in Williams (1934: 245-50).

11. For social class studies on Caribbean societies, see Broom (1954); Henriques (1953); M. G. Smith (1956b: 38-51); Simpson (1962b); Taylor (1955). For analyses of religion in relation to social class, see Becker (1932); Clark (1949); Dynes (1955); Niebuhr (1957); Pope (1942); Pfautz (1955); Yinger (1946; 1957); Wilson (1961); Goldschmidt (1944); Muelder (1957).

12. See chapters 2, 3, and 6 of this study.

Chapter 2

1. The basic source utilized for data on Jamaican slave origins is Edwards (1806, II: 263-83). Additional information comes from Madden (1835, I: 126-34); Phillips (1949: 555); Stewart (1823: 250-1); Phillippo (1843: 239-40); Gardner (1909: 175); Pitman (1926: 589-91); and Herskovits (1941: 33-53).

2. Edwards (1806, II: 266-78); cf. Olivier (1936: 60). Information on Ashanti survivals among the Maroons comes largely from educated and informed Jamaicans and, secondarily, from an Ashanti visitor to Jamaica who was taken to a Maroon settlement by Mr. Chester Dowdy of Kingston. See also Williams (1938).

3. Personal communication from Dr. M. G. Smith, University College of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica. See also Waddell (1863: 188, 201); Bruce (1946: 114).

4. Because of the nature of these abstractions it is impractical to document separately each point concerning African religious principles and patterns. The main sources consulted for data on this subject are:

a. General information--Forde (1954); Hambly (1937).
b. Senegambia area.--Little (1951); McCulloch (1950).
c. Gold Coast.--Rattray (1923, 1927); Manoukian (1950, 1952a, 1952b).
d. Slave Coast.--Bascom (1944); Herskovits and Herskovits (1933); Herskovits (1938); Forde (1951).
e. Benin.--Thomas (1913); Forde and Jones (1950); Forde et al (1955).
f. Congo-Angola area.--Weeks (1914); Hambly (1934); McCulloch (1952).

The Human Relations Area Files at Yale University were used extensively in the collection of data from all these areas.

5. Hambly (1937: 570-5). Witches and sorcerers are often equated in the literature, but should be distinguished. The term "witch" in this paper refers to a person who is said to harbor within himself an evil spirit which compels him to perform acts harmful to others. Witches in Jamaica and in some African tribes were supposed to shed their skins at night and suck the blood of human victims, causing gradual emaciation and eventually death. The term "sorcerer," on the other hand, refers to a religious or magical specialist who consciously and deliberately uses supernatural powers to harm others. For a discussion of African witch-finding cults, see

Christensen (1954: 76); or Forde et al (1955: 48-9).

6. An example of this interaction was the practice of distributing new slaves among the Creoles for seasoning. Edwards (1806, II: 341-2).

7. The term Maroon comes from the Spanish cimarrón, "runaway slave."

8. For an account of Maroon history and customs, see Edwards (1806, I: 337-95); or Williams (1938). Dunham (1946) gives a naive but enlightening description of contemporary Maroon customs, and Moore (1954: 1-4) summarizes briefly the history and some present traits of the Eastern Maroons.

9. For an extended analysis of the provision ground and marketing practices of the slaves, see Mintz and Hall (1960).

10. For descriptions of these ceremonies, see Phillippo (1843: 241-2); Stewart (1823: 269-70); Lewis (1834: 74-5); Sloane (1707: lviii-lvix); and Gardner (1909: 100).

11. Long (1774, II: 425). See also Lewis (1834: 24-6); Phillippo (1843: 242-3).

12. For detailed accounts of these developments, see Stewart (1823: 271); Gardner (1909: 383-5); and Williams (1932: 160-5).

13. Gardner (1909: 184-5). See also Stewart (1808: 250-1); Phillippo (1843: 283); Waddell (1863: 180).

14. For further descriptions of funerals during this period, see Leslie (1739: 325-6); Sloane (1707: xlviii); Stewart (1808: 250-1); (1823: 274-6); Gardner (1909: 186-7); Phillippo (1843: 244-6); Bell (1893: 144-7).

15. Banbury (1894: 35); Williams (1934: 172-3). See also Bell (1893: 121-6).

16. According to Gosse, P. H. A Naturalist's Sojourn in Jamaica (London, 1851), p. 275, as quoted in Curtin (1955: 238), the African Ceiba (Bombax pentandrum) and the Jamaican Ceiba (Eriodendoron anfractuosum) are near biological relatives.

17. See note five, chapter 2, above.

18. Edwards (1806, II: 298). This is a quote from an early report probably written by Long. Williams (1932: 108-

17) also quotes this report. See also Pitman (1926: 652).

19. For descriptive accounts of early Obeah practices and purposes, see Bell (1893: 1-23); Gardner (1909: 187); Madden (1835, II: 93-4); Robinson and Wallhouse (1893: 211-2); Udal (1915: 281-2); Edwards (1806, II: 296-306); Rampini (1873: 131-2).

20. Leslie (1739: 324). See also Edwards (1806, II: 302); Madden (1835, II: 103-5); Stewart (1823: 279).

21. For descriptions of Myal dances see Long (1774, II: 416); Phillippo (1843: 248-9); Lewis (1834: 354-5).

Chapter 3

1. Lewis (1834: 309-10). See also Long (1774, II: 428); Madden (1835, II: 100-1); Stewart (1823: 279). While these statements specify that Christianity constituted protection against Obeah and thus imply that it reduced social problems, it could also have had opposite effects. A baptised thief, for example, could rob fields protected by Obeah without fear, or a sorcerer might welcome baptism as a defense against retaliation from competitors.

2. For a history of the Moravians in Jamaica, see Buchner (1854). See also Olivier (1936: 94-8).

3. The most comprehensive account of Native Baptist history and customs occurs in Clarke (1869: 9-33, 221-4). See also Gardner (1909: 343-5, 350-2, 357-8); Clarke, Dendy, and Phillippo (1865: 30-9); Cox (1842, II: 12-18); and Phillippo (1843: 270-5).

4. Gardner (1909: 353-4). Duncan (1849) summarizes Wesleyan Methodist missionary activities in Jamaica during this period.

5. For a history of Baptist missionary work in Jamaica, see Cox (1842).

6. For example, Burchell was able by using this technique to maintain a congregation of more than 4,600 persons along a circuit of over a hundred miles (Cox, 1842, II: 69-74). See also Gardner (1909: 359-61); Waddell (1863: 25-6); Phillippo (1843: 395-7).

7. Gardner (1909: 361-5); Clarke (1869: 101-7); Olivier (1936: 92-3, 59-63). An excellent summary of the roles of Negro religious leaders in the 1831 insurrection appears in

Curtin (1955: 83-6).

8. "Remonstrance of Jamaica Presbytery with Baptist Missionaries," 1841, reprinted in Waddell (1863: 661-3). See also Waddell (1863: 111-14); Gardner (1909: 359-60); Curtin (1955: 32-7). For the Baptists' justification of their methods see Phillippo (1843: 307-39).

9. See Phillippo (1843: 306-46) for an exposition of this doctrine.

10. Gardner (1909: 391); Rampini (1873: 131); Williams (1827: 36-8). This confusion of concepts still exists among contemporary Jamaicans.

11. Williams (1827: 41). The writer formulated this idea after interviews with present-day Obeah Men, who never admit practicing sorcery themselves but always believe that other Obeah Men, particularly their competitors, do.

12. Lewis (1834: 97-8). Pullen-Burry (1905: 149) speaks of a belief that the devil comes for the souls of wicked persons upon their deaths. This is apparently another Christian reinterpretation.

13. Waddell (1863: 26). See also Robb (1861: 36); Waddell (1863: 35-6); Phillippo (1843: 272-3).

Chapter 4

1. An excellent account of the planters' methods of attacking these problems and of their results may be found in Curtin (1955: 127-32). See also Olivier (1936: 83-4, 106-10, 131-3); Paget (1950: esp. 7-10); Hall (1959: 21-3, 168-81).

2. Curtin (1955: 169). See Buchner (1854: 146-7); or Phillippo (1843: 243-4) for missionary interpretations of these reactions.

3. For accounts of conditions on the estates during this period, see Cumper (1954: 138-40); Sewell (1861: 192-4, 264-6); Curtin (1955: 126-32); Gardner (1909: 458-71); Underhill (1862: 242-4); Olivier (1936: 135-6, 167-8, 197).

4. Curtin (1955: 168) states that "in 1846, the Native Baptist congregations in the sugar parish of Vere were stronger than all the European churches together. Even in Kingston, Native Baptists in 1860 made up half the church-going population. Official returns are incomplete, but it

would be safe to assume that, throughout the island, the native form of Christianity had a firmer hold than European orthodoxy." See also Cumper (1954: 138-40); Smith (1953: 62-3); Underhill (1862: 190-2).

5. For historical accounts of the Myal procession, see Waddell (1863: 187-91); Gardner (1909: 459-60); Curtin (1955: 170).

6. For descriptions of Myalist ceremonies at this time, see Banbury (1894: 19-22); Buchner (1854: 140-2); Waddell (1863: 188-94).

7. For accounts of conditions during this period, see Olivier (1936: 128-57); Hall (1959: 52-8, 121-56, 207-45).

8. Curtin (1955: 191-5) gives an account of the actions of planters and magistrates during this period.

9. For summaries of the Morant Bay Rebellion and its consequences, see Gardner (1909: 471-94); Curtin (1955: 178-9, 195-200); Hall (1959: 241-53); Olivier (1936: 172-85).

10. Banbury (1894: 24-35). For further evidence of the importance of water in native religions, see Beckwith (1929: 100-3); Bell (1893: 38-42).

11. Banbury (1894: iii-iv) writes of a "St. Anns water crzze" in 1870, for example, and Beckwith (1929: 167) mentions a Mother Knotts who took water from a sacred St. Mary stream to become a famous healer. Perhaps the most outlandish healing cult developed recently in Kingston, where one Solomon Hewitt cured the sick with water from a hose connected to a public faucet on the municipal main. Oddly enough, he acquired a large, though local following. See Williams (1954a).

12. Beckwith (1923: 40-5); 1929: 167-71); Emerick (1916: 47-8); and Pullen-Burry (1905: 142-7); give detailed descriptions of Bedwardism.

13. Simpson (1956: 337); and personal communications from Mr. Ranny Williams and Mr. Edward Seaga, both of Kingston. Many Zion Revival leaders still look upon Bedward as a great leader of their cult or as its founder.

14. Beckwith (1923: 32-6); 1929: 161-5). For extended descriptions and analyses of present-day Zion Revivalist bands, see Simpson (1956); Moore and Simpson (1957-8).

15. For accounts of the importation of East Indian in-

dentured servants to Jamaica, see Erickson (1934: 134-46); Roberts (1957: 111-30).

16. Personal communications from Mr. Ranny Williams and Mr. Edward Seaga. See also Simpson (1956: i-ii, 338-9).

17. Moore (1954: 114-79, 189-275). A summary analysis of Kumina also appears in Moore and Simpson (1957-8). For another interpretation of the meaning of Kumina ceremonies, see Kerr (1952: 144-7).

18. For analyses of the Ras Tafari cult, see Simpson (1955b; 1955c); Smith, Augier, and Nettleford, 1962).

Chapter 5

1. In the remainder of this study the name Orange River will designate only the village proper. Appropriate terms will be appended when reference is made to Orange River district, estate, or property.

2. The term "bongo" connotes both African origins and low social status. Bongo Town apparently derived its name from the Africanoid customs of these early settlers, and present residents resent the appellation.

3. Logwood (Haematoxylon campechianum) is a wood used for making dye.

4. Prior to 1940 about seventy per cent of the villagers depended primarily upon wage labor on Hopewell and Orange River properties. Some present residents lived at that time in barracks on Marl Hill and in others near the Hopewell overseer's house about a mile northeast of the village.

5. For discussions of the Jamaican concept of "family land," see Clarke (1953); (1957: 20, 40-69); Davenport (1956: 58-9).

6. Cf. R. T. Smith (1956: 70-1): "All magical practices concerned with acquiring wealth are directed towards getting money . . . and not towards ensuring the productivity of farms or the increase of animal stock. No instance of anyone employing any kind of supernatural aids to farming was encountered during the course of field-work." This statement, made of British Guianese peasants, applies equally well to those in Orange River.

7. For a history of the Jamaican banana trade and a

description of banana production and distribution on the island, see Rodriques (1955).

8. During recent years the All Island Banana Growers' Association has introduced many new methods and techniques of banana production. Although the villagers tend generally to resist agricultural innovations, they recognize the improvements and benefits initiated by the AIBGA and readily accept new ideas from this source.

9. Even the headmaster of the school, a relatively wealthy and respected man, begged the writer for his typewriter. Most begging, however, is on a much smaller scale, involving only pennies or at most shillings.

10. The writer inadvertently tested this proposition several times by running out of cigarettes at social functions. In every case some recipient of former favors surreptitiously slipped him one or two, cautioning him not to give them away again. Once while traveling with some very poor villagers he lost his wallet. Each person in the group privately gave him a few pennies to help pay his fare back to Orange River.

11. Much work, extending far beyond the brief analysis presented here, has been done on family and household in Jamaica and in the Caribbean generally. For major recent contributions, see Clark (1957); Cohen (1956); Cumper (1958): Davenport (1956); Mintz and Davenport (1961: esp. the article by Davenport, pp. 420-54); M. G. Smith (1962: esp. 3-23, 125-265); R. T. Smith (1956; 1960); Solien (1960). See also Adams (1960); Cohen (1954); Greenfield (1961); Blake (1961).

12. The present analysis follows the model formulated by R. T. Smith (1956) in discussing the cyclical changes that occur in British Guianese household organization.

13. In the headmaster's apt terms, no one wants to "bear the brunt." He has done so in the past in managing cricket matches, but those who promised to help him never appeared and he says he will not do it again. As a consequence, the Orange River Cricket Club is probably now deceased.

14. The PTA broke up over such a dispute. According to the headmaster, a local shopkeeper withdrew her followers when he began trading at another shop. She has a different explanation--that he embezzled club funds--but she nevertheless did break up the club by her action.

15. Cf. Davenport's penetrating analysis of similar patterns in a fishing village on Jamaica's south coast. Davenport (1956: 291-3, 436).

16. For accounts of birth, pregnancy, and infancy customs and beliefs, see Beckwith (1923: 54-60); Henriques (1953: 120-7); and Kerr (1952: 25-33).

17. Cohen (1956) found adoption to have far more drastic results in his Manchester community than is the case in Orange River.

18. A comparatively rich little girl observed frequently by the writer had the following store of treasures, which she kept in a shoe box: two sardine tins, several spools, some small bottles and lids, a headless old homemade rag doll, and some scraps of cloth and ribbon to dress this "baby."

19. The writer can thankfully verify this conclusion. He contracted blood poisoning at a time when no physician was available, and had to seek help from the local Obeah Man. The latter grated a root called simply "antidote," mixed the powder with hot castor oil, and applied it to the wound. The poisoning cleared up within a half day, and a physician was never needed. For further accounts of Jamaican folk curing, see Simpson (1956: 382-400); Kerr (1952: 141-3); and Seaga (1956b). Cf. Mischel (1959).

20. For accounts of early twentieth century funeral rites, see Beckwith (1923: 70-87); and Williams (1934: 144-75). Henriques (1951); (1953: 139-44) found many survivals of the old customs as late as 1946, and it may be that they occur more extensively in other areas than in Orange River. See also Simpson (1957; 1960: 335).

Chapter 6

1. The church-sect distinction used here is derived from the one first devised by Troeltsch (1931) and later used by such writers as Niebuhr (1929); Clark (1949); Pope (1942); Pfautz (1955); and Wilson (1961). Yinger (1957) recently elaborated this classification, adding among other categories the cult, and Simpson (1956) has adopted his system in analyzing Jamaican religious groups. The definition of cult used in this study differs somewhat from that of Yinger and Simpson, but it subsumes the same kinds of Jamaican religious organizations.

2. Class-houses or out-stations appear to be direct descendants of the missions used in the old class-and-leader

system. Deacons or elders have taken over some of the functions of the class leaders, who no longer exist, and have charge of these buildings when the minister is absent.

3. Most lower-class people identify religion with spiritualism and tend to consider the Presbyterian more a club than a religious body. In a conversation about this matter, several informants decided that the Presbyterians must have the spirit since they belong to a church. These informants concluded that this spirit must be very quiet and subtle, but they remained not entirely convinced.

4. Even the annual harvest ceremony, at which members contribute food crops for auctioning, failed, probably because the elders emphasized raising money for the church rather than recreation. The Baptist and Church of God harvest ceremonies were gala affairs and financial successes, but the Presbyterians sadly bought back their own contributions, aided only by a few neighbors and passers-by.

5. During the early weeks of the study, several middle-class villagers told the writer that they were Presbyterians. He later discovered that they neither belonged to the church nor attended it. Similar incidents occurred in Spanish Town, where many persons claimed to be Anglicans or Catholics.

6. It must be noted that Niebuhr would almost certainly classify these groups as sects rather than churches, and it is true that they exhibit some sect characteristics. However, they are organized by missionary councils, have trained leaders, and conform to centrally issued points of doctrine and ritual. This is not to say that all Gospel Hall, Seventh Day Adventist, and Jehovah's Witnesses groups in Jamaica are churches, for there may well be groups with these names that arise under informal leaders. It should also be noted that the Richmond groups, while carrying relatively high prestige to the people of Orange River, may have lower status to Richmond residents.

7. This attitude goes beyond church members and may in fact be quite widespread. For example, several village women, some of them Baptists and all converted cultists, gossiped for almost a week about a candidate who merely twitched a few times while being immersed by the Baptist minister. They considered such behavior to be in extremely bad taste. Yet, the same women assured the writer that one cannot control possession. They seem to imply that a "heavenly" spirit would never commit possession in the pastor's presence, and thus that people who get the spirit on such occasions must deal with evil beings. This was not made explicit, however, and the contradiction remains unresolved.

8. The talking of "unknown tongues," a well-known Pentecostal practice with origins and justification in the Holy Bible (Acts 2; First Corinthians 12-14) occurs also in most Jamaican cults. Jesus Only tongues are relatively simple and uniform, usually involving short utterances. Examples follow. Longer passages followed the same pattern but could not be transcribed, for the writer had no recording device and the members could not reproduce their rapid, spontaneous gibberish when not in spirit.

> Shalimar. Bai shala meela. Shilihai bidinai bidi nai na. Haylamai shalimay Hallelujah. Mai shinimai shimini. Pray shidibai. Rili mai shili bai la. No shila bai shila mai lai hai.

9. The interesting psychological implications of such occurrences cannot, unfortunately, be discussed in this work. An obvious hypothesis suggested by this case is that of sibling rivalry, a phenomenon that did not, in the opinion of the writer, reach significant proportions in the village.

10. Several Jesus Only members and well-wishers spontaneously and vehemently expressed to the writer their resentment of the old settlers' clannishness, complaining that people not born in Orange River are outcasts in the village. This problem seemed to bother them more than other newcomers.

11. For example, they did not speak of cultist beliefs as wrong or untrue, but instead condemned cultists for worshiping spirits other than Jesus. They also talked readily about ghosts, in which they frankly believe.

12. There are several organized "Churches of God," each with an identifying prefix (e.g. Full Truth Church of God, New Testament Church of God) which is necessary to obtain legal recognition in Jamaica. All hold annual conferences in Kingston. If Elder's group affiliates formally with one of them, he says, it will assume the proper prefix.

13. Such splinter groups, always imminent in large organizations with popular sub-leaders, form in the same way that cliques divide. Such formation is probably the main factor in the proliferation of independent sect and cult groups throughout the island.

14. The writer verified her claim of curing one villager of almost complete paralysis. This man, a young Indian from Bongo Town, is now a devout member of the sect, and the only upper-class person in it.

15. Most of the writer's data on rural Zion Revival was obtained by observing ceremonies of bands near Orange River, interviewing the leaders and some members of these groups, and talking with cult members and sympathizers from the village. The recent monograph by Simpson (1956) has been used to supplement this information and to check points about which the writer was doubtful. Urban manifestations of the cult differ somewhat from the patterns discussed here, as Simpson's work shows.

16. The Zion Revival conception of spiritual gifts, like that of Pentecostal people, is derived from the Holy Bible (First Corinthians 12).

17. This idea, which may be only local, is held also by members of the Church of God. It seems to be a reformulation and rationalization of ghost belief, which Western influence has made disreputable in its original form.

18. For an extended list of such spirits, see Simpson (1955a: 89-90); or Simpson (1956: 344-5).

19. Groaning is also termed "sounding" and "trooping." Simpson (1956: 354) cites a physiological explanation of this phenomenon, which is technically termed "hypernea" or "hyperventilation," by C. H. Best (*The Physiological Basis of Medical Practice: A Text in Applied Physiology*, 1950).

20. Simpson (1956: 354) gives a detailed description of laboring behavior in Kingston. This behavior is sometimes called "trumping."

21. Zion Revival tongues are more variable than those of the Jesus Only people, and involve much longer utterances. Some members speak whole paragraphs, if such a term can be used. The following are some fragments of one such paragraph spoken by a villager at a local meeting:

> Sa da bihaiken, tili behai. Michael, Gabriel. Tili bihaiken . . . . Ai la bao . . . ke durihai, bai la. Oh liki Michael . . . . Aichay balada sahaiki bela sahaikin . . . . Baohu kala haikin, saba, saba, saba, bibilihaikin turala. . . . haoche ketura be taikin. Rrrrrrrr. Hikandoo, kon si dai laukindoo . . . . Ka hilikatai bela ka zandoo.

22. Cymbals are usually delivered in solo, and may be sung in English or in nonsense syllables which the members say are tongues. Choruses are sometimes sung in cymbal rhythm by the entire congregation. No Zion Revival cymbals were re-

corded, but the words to some are similar to Pocomania cymbals. See Chapter 7, note 15.

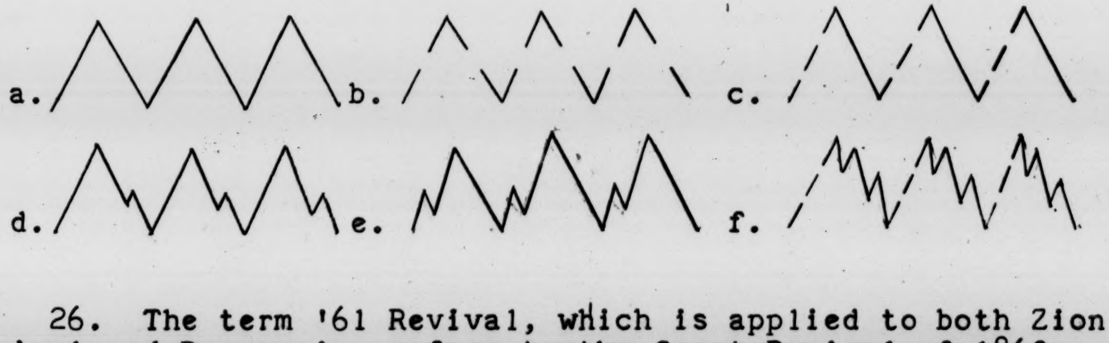
23. Most Jamaican cults, as well as the sects, use as a standard hymnal the collection of sacred songs compiled by Ira D. Sankey (1873).

24. Choruses are lively religious songs, most of which are apparently derived from choruses of hymns. Others are similar to American Negro spirituals, and still others are non-religious ditties like "Mary Had a Little Lamb," "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," and "My Bonnie Lies over the Ocean." They are repeated over and over, sometimes twenty or more times. Two examples of choruses popular with local Zion Revivalists follow.

"Aaron and Moses, playing in the harp,
Playing in the harp, playing in the harp.
Aaron and Moses, playing in the harp,
Playing in the harp of God."
(This chorus is sometimes sung in cymbal rhythm.)

"Me alone on the Watt Town road,
Though the road may be rocky and steep.
With me wrap around me head, and me banner in me hand,
Me alone on the Watt Town road.
(This song refers to Zion Revival pilgrimages. Watt Town, in St. Ann, is a famous center of the cult.)

25. The following diagrams will illustrate some Zion Revival groaning patterns. Upward strokes indicate inhalations, downward strokes exhalations, and breaks in the line intervals without sound. Pocomanians also groan but use only the simple pattern "a," which enables Zion Revivalists to infer that they have only weak spirits.



26. The term '61 Revival, which is applied to both Zion Revival and Pocomania, refers to the Great Revival of 1860-1861 as well as to the highest order. Some Pocomanians claim

that Zion Revivalists work only '60 Revival, which originated during the early part of the movement, and that Pocomania carries on the better developed phase of 1861. While not generally accepted, this idea fits the historical facts neatly, for Pocomania is more violent and demonstrative than Zion Revival, just as the later stages of the Great Revival were more frenzied than the 1860 phases.

27. For a fuller historical account and a more detailed functional analysis of Convince, see Hogg (1960). As shown in that work, the cult bears marked resemblances to the pre-emancipation Myal cults, and the two may be connected directly or indirectly through Maroon religion.

28. The writer has found in the literature only one work other than his own recent article that refers to the Convince cult. This source, a microfilmed doctoral dissertation which mentions the cult only briefly, indicates that Convince exhibits a similar lack of organization in southern St. Thomas, one of its strongest areas. Moore (1954: 58-60).

29. For example, Pocomanians believe that all Bongo spirits are anti-Christian and therefore evil, and that Convince ceremonies all have sorcerous purposes. Bongo Men, on the other hand, criticize Pocomanians for obtaining their spirits from graves and maintain that all Pocomania leaders perform destructive Obeah with such ill-gotten ghosts.

30. Several informants reported having known Bongo Women and having observed Bongo Men possessed by female spirits. The writer, however, met only male cultists and male ghosts.

31. The term "bongo" itself means African, implying that Jamaicans recognize the cult's Africanoid character. Jamaican conceptions of African traits are, however, often considerably distorted.

32. Some Bongo songs are sung entirely in chorus, while others use the leader-and-chorus style with well-wishers repeating the invariable chorus over and over and a Bongo Man or Apprentice singing the partially extemporaneous verse. Several examples may be found in Hogg (1960). Others follow.

Quattie tobacco, quattie lost, oh.
Roll and tumbulay (variations--tumbuday, tumbuyay, etc.)

(This song advises that money spent on tobacco is wasted--like other Bongo songs it has moral implications which the cultists ignore.)

Tambuwele, tapala kei mo, tambuwele.
(These are presumably African words. The writer could find no one who could translate them.)

(chorus)	(verse)
Congo, yerei, dance congo.	Ricket-a-ricket.
Congo, yerei, dance congo.	Oh, Mother Margaret.
Congo, yerei, dance congo.	Holy Mother Fankey.
Congo, yerei, dance congo.	Ricket-a-ricket. (Etc.)

(chorus)	(verse)
Rum and water.	Bongo no want it.
Rum and water.	Bongo no take it.
Rum and water.	Him say him no want it.
Rum and water.	Him a no take it. (Etc.)

(Bongo Men when possessed drink great quantities of rum, but always undiluted.)

33. For a more detailed discussion of Convince social structure and a fuller analysis of the factors in the cult's decline, see Hogg (1960).

Chapter 7

1. Martha Beckwith, the first writer to mention Pocomania by name, implies this when she states that during the early 1920's the cult centered near Richmond and was restricted to the mountains of St. Mary and northern St. Catherine. She gathered her data from a minor leader of the Orange River band and mentions no other large groups. Beckwith (1929: 176-8).

2. It must be noted that this situation may be atypical. It is quite likely that in other communities Zion Revivalists are normal and Pocomanians are the deviants.

3. The rationale for the beliefs and practices associated with the Sun Dial ceremony may be found in the Holy Bible (Joshua 10: 12-14).

4. Such accusations occur repeatedly, following the pattern observed in inter-clique rivalries and in complaints of theft and sorcery. By them the accuser attempts to raise his own relative status by undermining that of his rival. They function to affirm the belief that Pocomanians are evil, and thus contribute to the cult's notoriety.

5. Jamaicans usually give the familiar description of mermaids sitting on rocks combing their hair. Their ideas about the appearance of these beings come largely from European books and American movies. Indeed, these authorities are often cited as proof that mermaids do exist.

6. Ideas about the exact nature of the possessing spirit in this regard are somewhat confused. Some members say that the water spirit itself does the possessing, while others maintain that it is the ghost of a former member who had such a spirit. Still others contend that both types of beings possess living cultists.

7. Pocomanians perform the same functions and have the same specialties when possessed by angels as they do when possessed by ghosts. The former, however, do not excite them to as fervent efforts.

8. The writer heard a great deal about Destruction Tables, but never observed one or met a Pocomanian who admitted holding them. It is likely that they exist, like sorcery, mainly in Jamaican imaginations.

9. The gross cost of Walker's 1956 Thanksgiving Table, for example, was more than 23 pounds, of which about 7 pounds went for the sacrificial goats and chickens, 6 pounds for other ritual supplies, 5 1/2 pounds for provisions (mainly food), and 4 1/2 pounds to pay the transportation expenses of invited guests. The intake totaled about 7 pounds; 5 1/2 pounds from entrance fees and 1 1/2 from candle-lighting fees; which leaves a net cost of more than 16 pounds for the Table. Smaller ceremonies, of course, cost less.

10. For example, Moore (1954: 78-9) says that in St. Thomas the pail of water placed under the table conducts spirits from the atmosphere to the ground, while in Orange River it is simply for the convenience of Nurses and has no spiritual functions or significance.

11. The following choruses of the latter type are favorites of the Orange River group:

Oh, we take a walk to Gobay,
Want you tell me what you see there.
See me brother picking cherries, off a cherry tree.
Fast-mouth dead and gone,
Bitter-belly there-a fe mind them.
See them there, see them there, see them there.
See them there, see them there, see them there.
Oh, me want to know, where the other one gone.

- - - -

I blow me blow, Sitaira there, I blow me blow.
I blow me blow, Sitaira there, I blow me blow.
Oh, Sitaira, me mother, she dead and she buried,
She buried down-a river side.

(These choruses are sometimes sung in cymbal time to accompany laboring.)

12. One Shepherd, for example, chants in the following manner:

Ohhhhhhh, sen toola, sen toola.
En si yeli bom, sin tali gel ohhhhhh,
Come Father Grannill, ohhhhhh.
Sin yeli bom, but ohhhhhhh,
Shepherd Mankriff, come ohhhhhhh.
Det a walk, Mother Rogers, ohhhhhhh. (etc.)

Another sounds like this:

Name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost I call you ohhhhhh.
Come in, come in, come in Shepherd Douglas, ohhhhhhh.
Me want you, me want you come to us, ohhhhhh.
Come in, come in, come in Father Laevas ohhhhhh.
St. Mary bands calling, calling you.
Ohhhhhhh, what shall I do, ohhhhhh. (etc.)

13. An example of a special cymbal song, often sung by the whole congregation, is the following.

Come bury me, come country man, come bury me.
Come digger man a dig a hole fe bury me. (repeated endlessly.)

Other cymbals are sung leader-and-chorus style, with the onlookers repeating the invariable chorus and the Cymbal Man extemporizing the verse:

(chorus)	(verse)	(chorus)
One eye,	Shepherd man come look me with that	One eye.
One eye,	Who come 'round here-a with that	One eye.
One eye,	Daddy Walker looking with his	One eye.
One eye,	Revival bands they labor under	One eye. (etc.)

(chorus)	(verse)
St. Mary dove a coo,	'Pon the river, yah.
St. Mary dove a coo,	In me garden, yeah.
St. Mary dove a coo,	Oh, you River Maid.
St. Mary dove a coo,	And the sun arise.
St. Mary dove a coo,	Want to hear you now.
St. Mary dove a coo,	Pata kalingai.
St. Mary dove a coo,	Mother call them, oh. (etc.)

Finally, an example of a cymbal sung entirely in tongues is:

Sangon mati sangon.
Sambon mala sangon.
Sambala mo sangon.
Sandon mobai sangon. (etc.)

14. Walker is too old to labor much and confines himself mainly to such supervision. When he does become possessed he usually stamps about muttering and growling in tongues, angrily scolding and quarreling with unseen beings, and occasionally shouting warnings. All other activities cease at these times, for his behavior is quite impressive and he has great power.

15. Erroneously believing these sacrifices to be illegal, St. Mary Pocomanians made the writer promise not to photograph them.

16. Seaga (1956a) refutes the common assumption that Pocomania leaders are charlatans who milk their followers and maintain their power through fear. As he contends, the obligations of band leadership usually far outweigh its advantages. See also Simpson (1956: 404); Simey (1946: 115).

17. Simpson (1956: 382-8, 434-40; 1960: 334) points out the close relationship between Obeah and revivalism, and suggests that they form a distinct complex in lower-class Jamaican culture. The present writer agrees fully.

Chapter 8

1. The 1943 census reported a population of over 200,000 for the Kingston-St. Andrew urban area, and a sample population survey in 1953 estimated more than 100,000 persons in West Kingston alone. Simpson (1956: 321).

2. The writer obtained few objective data to support this statement, but was deeply impressed by the bleak destitution, educational deficiencies, and isolation from Western institutions of many Pocomanians and Ras Tafarians. Simpson (1955a, b, c, 1956) concurs, and notes that many revivalists are immigrants from rural areas.

3. For analyses of the Ras Tafari movement see Simpson (1955b; 1955c); Smith, Augier, and Nettleford (1960).

4. Simpson (1956: 338-9, 401-2). See also Simpson (1954: 2); Henriques (1953: 78). The census itself contains a statement to the effect that its figures for Pocomania are probably too low (Central Bureau of Statistics (1945: lxiv).

5. Personal communications from Mr. Ranny Williams and Mr. Edward Seaga, both of Kingston.

6. This preponderance of females seems even more marked in Kingston, where according to Williams (1955) eighty per cent of Pocomanians are women, and according to Simpson (1956: 403) "women outnumbered men four or five to one" among revivalists generally.

7. Verbal communication from Mr. Ranny Williams. See also Simpson (1956: 402, 404); Kerr (1954: 89-90). The writer himself met two homosexual Pocomania leaders from Kingston, and Moore (1954: 61) indicates that similar tendencies may occur in Morant Bay, another urban center.

8. For further descriptions of ground taking and Rising Tables see Williams (1954b); Simpson (1956: 355, 375-6); and Hogg (1956: 14).

9. Cf. Simpson (1956: 355), whose statement that most converts remain on the ground only a few hours must refer to Zion Revivalists. Pocomanians seldom spend less than a week as souls.

10. Moore (1954: 84-6) indicates that similar distinctions apply among Morant Bay Pocomanians.

11. Simpson (1956: 403-4). As Simpson points out, the portions of Surveyor, Diver, Approver, Watchman, and Prophet have parallels in the Trinidadian Shouter cult and in some West African cult groups. Cf. Herskovits and Herskovits (1947: 306).

12. This account of the origin of Indian portions in Pocomania was given the writer verbally by Mr. Ranny Williams of Kingston.

13. Simpson says that most revivalists do have permanent camps, but he appears to be writing mainly about Zion Revivalists. Simpson (1956: 360-1).

14. Simpson (1956: 356-8, 360-5) describes examples of such "stations" in detail and discusses their meanings. He says that many revivalists impute great spiritual significance to the stones, particularly those with odd shapes, believing them to have power or contain spirits. The present writer's informants do not attach such importance to stones, but keep them clean and white simply so that they will look nice and thus prove attractive to both spirits and people.

15. See Simpson (1956: 366-7) for a more detailed description of revivalist prayer meetings. The "Divine Worship" service that he describes conforms more closely to Zion Revival than to Pocomania patterns, which usually omit the preaching and testimonials and place more emphasis upon dancing and other non-sectarian activities.

16. See, for example, Simpson (1956: 371-6, 380-2); Moore (1954: 78-82, 107-9); Fermor (1950: 343-6); Hurston (1938: 14-5).

17. Mr. Edward Seaga found that some of these songs, as well as some of the spoken tongues, actually are in Hindustani. An example of a cymbal sung partly in the Indian tongue and partly in English follows.

Coolie man a talk out ya salbone.
Coolie man a talk with ya yalgoni.
Der we walgoni.
Hear one of them a talk with ya salbana.
Talk out you salboni, talk with you talgoni.
Ti yeli soo balgona,
Ee lai so balgoni, ee lai so balgonai.
Say wanda, say wanda too.
Coolie man a talk you ya babogi.
Coolie man a talk out ya salgoni. (etc.

18. The most popular of these works are The Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses and Albertus Magnus, published by the De Lawrence Company of Chicago. Cf. Kerr (1952: 147-8); Simpson (1956: 343, 361-2); Williams (1934: 100-3).

19. For a more extended comparison and analysis of Obeah as against Science, see Hogg (1961).

20. Hurston (1938: 10) describes one of the Levi's as a major Pocomania figure at the time of her visit.

21. Ranny Williams (1955) speaks of such a leader, and informants told the writer about two or three who dominated Kingston Pocomania at different periods in the recent past.

Chapter 9

1. See above, pp. 19-20, and Smith (1956b: 15-16).

2. See, for example, Evans-Pritchard (1952); Merton (1949: 125-49); Radcliffe-Brown (1952: 178-204); Homans (1950: 334-8). Henriques (1949; 1953: 160-72) and Cohen (1954) interpret Jamaican society in these terms. For an extended

criticism of this type of theory, see Leach (1954: 1-17, 279-92).

3. It is not, of course, a closed system, but neither are communities, tribes, or societies. Systems are constructs and, considering the fictions employed in constructing most social systems, it seems quite permissible to speak of Jamaican religious organization as such (cf. Leach, 1954: 1-17, 281-92; Redfield, 1955: 33-51).

4. See, for example, Linton (1936: 304-66); Radcliffe-Brown (1952: 178-204); Malinowski (1945); Wilson and Wilson (1945). Cf. Leach (1954: 6-7, 284-5).

5. Troeltsch (1931); Niebuhr (1929). See also Weber (1930).

6. For major subsequent expressions of this view, see Becker (1932: 613-42); Yinger (1946, 1957: 125-312). Cf. Pope (1942); Dynes (1955); Goldschmidt (1944); Muelder (1957).

7. See, for example, Pope (1942); Muelder (1957); Clark (1949). But, cf. Wilson (1961: esp. 1-11, 317-27).

8. A comprehensive analysis of this process occurs in Pope (1942: esp. 117-21). See also Clark (1949: 16-20); Niebuhr (1929: 19-21); Goldschmidt (1944); Brewer (1952: Muelder (1957).

9. For a penetrating fictional treatment of this general theme, based mainly on the Bedwardite movement and showing great insight into organizational processes in Jamaican religion, see Wynter (1962).

10. Cf. Wilson (1961: esp. 1-11, 325-54), who analyzes three long-established English sects that have not acquired church status. For a discussion of barriers to social mobility in Jamaica, see Henriques (1953: esp. 42-63, 167-70).

GLOSSARY

Armor Bearer: Ceremonial valet or personal assistant to a Zion Revival or Pocomania leader.

bail out: To bring a person out of trance, used in the Pocomania cult.

band: A local Pocomania or Zion Revival group.

Bedwardism: A native Jamaican religious movement, basically Christian in character, that flourished during the early twentieth century under Alexander Bedward. The direct predecessor of the Zion Revival cult.

bongo: Having an African nature or origin--usually derogatory. Used also as a nickname for the Convince and Kumina cults.

Bongo Man: A member of the Convince cult or a ghost that possesses him. Also, a leader and perhaps a member of the Kumina cult.

booth: An arbor made of bamboo poles and coconut frond thatching, with open sides. Used in various social and ceremonial events in rural areas.

bukra: A white person, or the characteristics or customs of white people.

bush doctor: A native healer specializing in herbal medicine.

camp: A crude but permanent religious building, usually with open wattle sides and a thatched roof.

Captain: A male Zion Revival leader.

chorus: A lively song, religious but non-spiritual, which is usually accompanied by hand clapping, drumming, or tambourine playing.

class-and-leader-system: Nineteenth century missionary practice of organizing local sectarian groups under native assistants.

Convince: A small, scattered Africanoid cult emphasizing interaction with ghosts. Sometimes called Fankey or Convince Flenkee.

Coolie: A person of East Indian descent, or his characteristics or customs.

Coromantee: A slave or a custom from the Gold Coast--usually referring to Ashanti, Fanti, or Akan peoples and cultures.

Creole: A person or custom of native Jamaican origin--used mainly in slave days to distinguish native from African.

crown: To invest a Pocomanian with an official status as a leader. Also, the headdress worn by a member of the Convince cult when possessed.

cutlass: A cane knife, bush knife, or machete.

cymbal: A special rhythm, or a song in this rhythm, which sets the tempo for spiritual dancing in the Zion Revival and Pocomania cults.

destruction: Any malignant influence of a spiritual or magical nature.

duppy: The spirit of a dead person--a ghost.

fallen angel: One of the spirits who followed Satan in his fall from grace and now wander about the earth. They often possess Pocomanians.

Fankey: See Convince.

Father: The highest generally recognized male leader in the Pocomania cult. He often has jurisdiction over several local groups.

ganja: Marijuana.

Garvey movement: A back-to-Africa movement led by Marcus Garvey during the 1920's and early 1930's. The predecessor of the Ras Tafari sect.

Great Revival: A highly emotional religious movement which swept Jamaica in 1860 and 1861. It was started by sectarians but rapidly developed deviant forms. A predecessor of the Zion Revival and Pocomania cults.

groan: To hyperventilate--to overbreathe with a harsh, rasping sound while possessed. Used in the Zion Revival and Pocomania cults.

higgler: A person, usually a woman, who grows or buys produce in rural areas and sells it in the cities, either on the streets or in the markets.

John Connu: The traditional Jamaican Christmas parade festival, now almost extinct. Also, the central figure in this festival.

jumbie: A place spirit. Sometimes used also to denote ghost.

jump: See labor.

Kumina: The most Africanoid of the present-day Jamaican cults. Also, the drums used in ceremonies of this cult.

labor: To dance while possessed at Zion Revival or Pocomania ceremonies.

long-meter: A slow, dirge-like rhythm for singing hymns, usually used at wakes and at Pocomania and Zion Revival ceremonies to call spirits.

Maroons: Descendants of escaped slaves, who live in independent, isolated communities in the mountains of Jamaica.

Mother: The female leader of a Zion Revival or Pocomania cult group.

Myal: An Africanoid religious cult, now extinct, which resurged periodically in various forms through most of Jamaican history. The last major expression of Myalism was the Great Myal Procession of 1842.

Nana: A native midwife, who is frequently also a bush doctor.

Native Baptists. Various syncretized Afro-Christian sects and cults which developed under native leaders during the nineteenth century.

nine-night: A funeral ceremony held, ideally, nine days after death. In practice it is often held much later, if at all.

Obeah: West Indian necromancy--a type of magic, African in origin, which emphasizes the use of ghosts as active principles. It has many purposes, but is used most often for curing.

order: A phase of a Zion Revival or Pocomania ceremony dominated by a particular set of spirits, during which converted members labor continuously. Also, a structural division of a large, urban Pocomania band.

outside child: A man's child by a woman with whom he does not live.

pardner: A money-saving club in which each member contributes a specified amount of money each week and receives all the money contributed in one week.

Pocomania: An Afro-Christian religious cult which emphasizes interaction with ghosts, water spirits, and fallen angels. It is called "*Revival*" by its members, as "Pocomania" is usually a term of derogation.

portion: A specialized spiritual status, involving definite duties, obligations, and behaviors, in the Pocomania cult.

post: See portion.

Ras Tafari: A religious movement, basically sectarian, which emphasizes Negro revolt against white domination and a return to Africa.

Reading: Divination--foretelling the future and magically diagnosing illness and other problems.

Revival: Generally, any emotional, demonstrative, nominally Christian religious group. Specifically, Pocomania.

River Maid: See Water Maid.

Science: A form of automatic magic derived from European occultist books and utilizing manufactured and synthetic materials. It is often confused or mixed with Obeah.

seal: Consecrated area around which cult ceremonies take place. Used in the Zion Revival, Pocomania, and Convince cults.

set-up: A wake, or any ceremony lasting through the night, at which participants sing and pray.

shadow: The spiritual entity of a person which becomes the ghost upon his death. Loosely, a ghost.

Shepherd: A high-ranking male Pocomania functionary, often the leader of a local cult group.

square: One-tenth of an acre of land.

Sun Dial: An early morning Pocomania ceremony involving sun-gazing.

Table	A major Pocomania or Zion Revival ceremony centering around a ritually decorated table. They are of many different types.
Water Maid	A water spirit or mermaid. In Pocomania, a female functionary who is regularly possessed by such a spirit.
well-wisher	A person who regularly participates in the ceremonies of a religious group, but who is not an official member.
work	See labor.
wrap	A turban, worn ceremonially by Zion Revivalists and by some female Pocomanians.
Zion Revival	A revivalistic cult, basically Christian in orientation, which emphasizes communication and interaction with heavenly angels.

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